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Just one Encounter: Sensation, Surface, Space.

(Distilling a mixed-mode heuristic, to make the process of inventing original choreographies more transparent)

A thesis submitted to Middlesex University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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December 2011

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Abstract

This research undertaking suggests that the studio-based process of inventing original choreographic works can be seen, in certain frameworks, as a complex 'theoretical practice'. It sets out to render the decisions that I, as an artist, make in the process of inventing three choreographic works, 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH', more transparent and self-reflexive, and simultaneously to enquire into the question of whether, and how, writing might serve to illuminate aspects of my overall choreographic and performance practice. The studio-based process of inventing these three works– with which the written strands necessarily engage – reflects my desire to explore questions about dance, choreography and performance as they emerge in my practice and with reference to the canon of western contemporary dance performance.

In the mixed-mode heuristic framework underlying the present investigation the studio-based and text-based strands of inquiry are integrated in an extra-hierarchical mode, functioning thus interdependently as strands having equal epistemic value within that undertaking. That is, each is equivalent in terms of an ongoing enquiry into knowledge.

The present undertaking examines and reflects on the ways that modes and methods of inquiry appropriated from the tradition of contemporary and post-modern dance performance, the Somatic practices of Authentic Movement and Body-Mind Centering, together with the Buddhist practice of Mindfulness Meditation, support my status as remaining '*present with'* sensations, emotions and thoughts that arise and inflect the other-than-linguistic qualitative reasoning that underlies the decisions I make in the process of inventing 'signature' choreographic works – by which I mean works that are recognisably my own. Investigations into the relationship between one's 'self' and one's thoughts are extended by borrowing selectively from

published research within the fields of Philosophy, Science, Cognitive Science and Psychology.

The mixed-mode heuristic framework provides for the emergence of a relational space between the studio-based and text-based strands of research. In this space the subtle, layered and always evolving sub-strands of both are rendered more transparent, thereby providing for the questions and decision-making processes underlying the invention of 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' to surface and become more fully revealed: can I create choreographic structures that might provide for audiences to have an intimate experience of dance and performance? And how might these choreographies also provide for somatic experiences of dance, and the space within which it unfolds, to be shared by the dancer(s) and audience in performance?

I propose to demonstrate that this project's original contributions to knowledge are located in (i) the design of the mixed-mode heuristic framework within which I examine and reflect on how writing, in a range of registers, might serve to illuminate the process of inventing original choreographic works (ii) the choreographic works 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' (iii) what can be identified as the category of '*somatically-revolving-empathy'*

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the many people who encouraged and supported me throughout this research undertaking.

First and foremost I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Professor Susan Melrose, University of Middlesex, whose insightful guidance and extremely generous feedback was deeply inspiring at every stage of the research.

I would like to thank all of artists with whom I collaborated in the process of inventing and performing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', Return Journey' and 'HaH': Michael McLoughlin, Mary Wycherley, James Kelly, Inmaculada Moya, Jurgen Simpson. Each process was greatly enriched by their sensitive and creative contributions. In addition, I would like to thank Michael Fitzpatrick (Limerick City Gallery), Wille White (Project Arts Centre) and the Arts Council of Ireland for providing financial resources towards the production of these choreographic works.

Thanks are also due to Dr. Helen Phelan, the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance for her support and guidance at all stages of my research and to Dr. Joanne Moles for her encouragment and feedback at the final stages. And a special thanks to Michael McCabe for his care in compiling the DVD materials that are part of this submission.

And finally I would like to thank Kevin and Maire Nunan and Sheila Nunan for gently nudging me along with words of encouragement, MrDgapguru for his wisdom and his soups and Ozer Mc Mahon for his always delightfully fresh prespective, like a breeeze, a breath, which releases .... Ahhhh

List of Images

Introduction

This practice-based research undertaking comprises two primary stands of inquiry, one of which is studio-based and the other text-based. Its overall aim is to render my process of inventing original choreographic works more transparent and self-reflexive, and to simultaneously to enquire into the question of whether, and how, writing might serve to illuminate this aspect of my overall choreographic and performance practice. In Brian Massumi's terms (2002), my interest is whether the inclusion of writing might bring about a qualitative transformation, not to 'the work itself', but to my own relationship with and understanding of some of the decision-making processes specific to the work I make and by extension by illuminate some wider aspects of choreographic invention. Examination of, and reflection on, aspects of the studio-based processes that informed the invention 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' are central to this research undertaking. The latter two choreographies are included, in DVD format, as key components of this final submission as are photographic images of 'Audience (1) Waltzers'.

In addition, in light of the fact that there remains, to date, a dearth of 'alternative' formal academic models to support artists in examining and reflecting on, through writing, the practice-theoretical underpinnings of their own creative, epistemic *process* of invention (Bannerman et al 2006) one of the aims of this research undertaking, borne out of necessity, has become the question of how to invent one. The multi-disciplinary mixed-mode heuristic framework (Melrose 2003; Ulmer 1994) that emerges from this process is 'interpraxiological' (it draws systematically on a range of modes of practice – choreographic, dancerly, writing - to intervene critically into other practices) and sets out to provide for its studio-based and text-based strands of inquiry to be integrated in extra-hierarchical mode, functioning then interdependently as strands of equal epistemic value (as comparable 'knowledge objects', in practice theorist Knorr Cetina's terms (2001)) rather than separated out and opposed (as is

often the case for those who maintain a separation between what they call ‘theory’ and ‘practice’).

The studio-based strand of inquiry, which is strongly informed both by the methods and modes of inquiry underlying my practice, and by my sensibility as an artist, revolves around questions about dance, choreography and performance: can I create choreographic structures that might provide for audiences to have an intimate experience of dance and performance? And how might these choreographies also provide for somatic experiences of dance, and the space within which it unfolds, to be shared by the dancer(s) and audience in performance? ‘Audience (1) Waltzers’, ‘Return Journey’ and ‘HaH’ each emerged as a meditation on these questions, which, in the present context, equally call for written illumination.

The text-based strand of inquiry, which comprises four chapters/Strands, revolves around questions about writing and the possible role and function of writing in my processes of invention and reflection upon these. It asks if, and how, writing might be integrated into the heuristic frame without causing the research to split into the hierarchical theory and practice paradigm. It also asks if, and how, writing in a range of registers might support me in a particular project: to make more transparent how my expertise[1] in the methods and modes of inquiry underlying my studio-based practice together with my sensibility as an artist, inform the decisions I make in my process of inventing ‘Audience (1) Waltzers’, ‘Return Journey’ and ‘HaH’. Additionally it asks how writing might serve to illuminate some of the subtle and not always visible-on-the-surface questions/sensations that permeate the processes of inventing these three works.

Because of the multiplicity of questions/sensations being simultaneously reflected on in this mixed-mode research undertaking the relationship between its text-based and studio-based strands is, by necessity, very much determined by the way in which their respective wheels/modes of inquiry turn. As the text-based questions turn they draw in reflections and insights from the studio-based practice and in so doing cause the circumference of the former to expand. In a parallel, but deeply related and simultaneously occurring, process the studio-based practice also revolves around its own emergent questions/sensations about dance, choreography and performance and

as it does it draws in questions from the text-based strand. I would like to think that any researcher-reader will get a sense (when engaging with the text, the photographic images and with the DVD material), of how the respective circles of the text-based and studio-based strands seem to act as a productive force in relation to the other.

Throughout this research undertaking I engage with their respective thematic threads as I set out to make my process of inventing original choreographic works more transparent whilst simultaneously nudging them towards a catalytic relationship with the process of inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH'.

I begin chapter/Strand One by looking at the 'knowledge-political' issues (including what is argued to be the privileged status of writing in knowledge/theory production in the Academy) that I need to address if I am to invent a heuristic frame in which the text-based and studio-based research processes might be integrated as strands of equal epistemic value. I set out to do this by proposing that my primarily studio-based choreographic practice, pursued within this doctoral framework, is itself a complex 'theoretical practice', and argue that the inquiry cannot therefore be delimited, separated (yet simultaneously thereby co-joined), into the hierarchical relationship inherent in the categorization 'theory and practice'. In protesting against this classical philosophical as well as practised configuration, which implies according to Bannerman, 'conscious theory versus inchoate practice' (Bannerman 2006 p. 16), I locate therein a central and critical problematic for this specific research undertaking and argue that to retain it would not only cause the epistemic status of my studio-based research to be undermined but would also require me to examine and account for my arts practice, from the perspective of conceptual paradigms appropriated from 'writerly' (Melrose 2003) disciplinary perspectives.

The point I am making here, lest it be perceived that I am tilting at windmills, is not that I imagine words as tyrannical but that I see the privileged status of writing in knowledge production in the academy as having the capacity to throw giant-like shadows over the landscape of practice-as-research.

At various stages throughout the process of inventing this heuristic frame I find myself, as an artist/researcher, torn between my deferential interest in the knowledge produced by established 'writerly' paradigms and my concern as to whether the multiplicity of simultaneously spinning questions, and the schematic reasoning, at play in my studio-based practice might be best served by the disciplinary specific and canonically refined liner logic of the qualitative and quantitative methodologies that underpin the former. In addition to addressing these issues of the apparent 'fit' of one practice to its other, I also consider the question of disciplinary expertise. To put it quite simply I am less practised in writing than I am in creating and performing choreographic works and this is something that presents its own set of challenges in this research context. Notwithstanding these challenges, I am nonetheless interested in exploring, as part of this research undertaking, what I perceive as the potential of words - reading, writing – to illuminate specific aspects of my studio-based process of invention: my starting-point is the role of artist-researcher, concerned to make new work informed and driven by an ongoing enquiry.

I return, again and again, to make this point in each chapter/Strand of the text. I do this in order to reiterate the fact that the relationship between the text-based and studio-based strands is layered and overlapping, and to diffuse any expectations that the reader might have about a more conventional relationship between these two, in which the former would serve to investigate, analyse and/or explain the latter.

In the first chapter/Strand I set out my intention to integrate, throughout the text, new modes of academic writing beyond those positioned to the side of already-known research methods (and their methodological justification**).** I proceed towards the identification of registers of writing and modes of inquiry more suitable for a researcher's 'theoretical curiosity' and taste for discovery resonant with those proposed in Ulmer's pedagogic model called 'mystory' (Ulmer 1989)[2]; the latter does not stop with analysis or comparative study but conducts such scholarship in preparation for the design of a rhetoric/poetics leading to the production of new work (Ulmer 1994).

Only some of the simultaneously occurring questions/sensations at the heart this research undertaking are introduced in chapter/Strand One; others gradually emerge and become clarified, in later chapters/ Strands, through the relational positioning and re-positioning of the carefully selected modes and methods of inquiry that comprise the heuristic frame. This renders the overall research undertaking 'tele-illogical', a term that Ulmer coined to reflect the peculiar, temporality of euretic or inventive thinking which according to him is 'goal directed, without knowing exactly where it is going' (Ulmer 1989, p.19). In my interpretation of his observation, I want to signal a set of studio-based and text-based practices that are goal-directed without my always knowing, in advance of the making and the enquiry, where they are going.

The text-based strand of this heuristic research frame includes photographic images of selected works that I either choreographed and/or performed in, or both, between 1983 and 2008. Presented in chronological order these photographs are first introduced at the end of Strand One beginning with images of the first solo that I choreographed and performed, in a professional dance context, as a member of Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre (1981-1986).

Chapter/Strand Two is punctuated with photographs of works that I choreographed when I was Artistic Director of Daghdha Dance Company (1988-1999). This chapter/Strand also includes photographs, taken in 2006, of the Maya Lila performance collective of which I was a member (2002 -2011). All of the above photographs are intended to function as one of the layers of the heuristic frame to the end of providing some insights into the evolution of my choreographic practice, artistic 'signature', and the development of my sensibility as an artist. By punctuating the text-based strand with these photographs, I am also aiming to break the surface of the written word punctually and to evoke for the reader the mixed-mode components of this research undertaking. The relationship between the photographs and questions being explored in chapter/Strand Two is, for the most part, indirect in that the text does not explain and/or analyze these images. However there are times when I refer to specific photographs in order to highlight some issues being considered in the text. In terms of method, the visual thread thereby established in tandem with the writing seeks to remind the reader of my status as practitioner-researcher.

In this chapter/Strand I examine and reflect on how modes and methods of inquiry, appropriated from specific disciplinary practices, inform my studio-based process of invention: these include the Hawkins' contemporary dance technique (Hawkins 1992; Celichowska 2000; Bales Nettle-Fiol 2008), the Somatic practice of Authentic Movement (Adler 2002; Davis 2007; Hanna 1986; Eddy 2009), Body-Mind Centering (Bainbridge-Cohen 1993: Hartley 1995, 2004) and the Buddhist practice of Mindfulness Meditation (Sogyal Rinpoche 1992; Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche 1991; Ray 2002; Nyanponkia Thera 1962). I identify how my study and practice of these modes and methods of inquiry supports me in refining the other-than-linguistic 'qualitative reasoning' (Siegesmund 2004) processes and 'research-professional intuitive operations' (Melrose 2003) that underlie the decisions I make in the process of inventing 'signature' choreographic works – by which I mean works that are 'marked', recognizably, by my invention. As the writing spirals and slides across, and through, the fluid and membranous surfaces and the distinct and distinctive boundaries that defines each of the above disciplinary practices it allows me to make their inter-related role and function as layers of my choreographic practice more apparent and also more visible to the reader.

I proceed then to examine and reflect on how modes and methods of inquiry appropriated from these disciplinary practices support me in developing the skills and sensitivity necessary to remain '*present with'* sensations, emotions and thoughts as they arise and inflect the operations of decision-making in my process of invention. This subtle layer of processing is seldom visible, and therefore difficult to discern, on the surface of the practice and this has particular implications for my research enquiry. In epistemic terms, my practices 'do more than they do', and they 'show more than they show'. In my studio-based research, investigations into sensations and experiences of being *'present with'* thoughts and emotions as they arise in the process of decision-making led, inexorably, to questions about the relationship between the former and the notion of my 'self' as an artist-researcher.

I extend my investigation into the question of 'self' in this section. In doing so I borrow selectively and to some extent notionally from published research within the

fields of Philosophy, Science, Cognitive Science and Psychology which compares and contrasts the methods by which Western and Eastern philosophical traditions (including the Buddhist meditative tradition of mindfulness/awareness) carry out their respective examinations into whether the 'I' exists as a single, independent, truly existing 'self' or ego (Varela et al 1993; Wallace 1998; 2003; Galin 2003; Watson et al 1999; Guenther and Kawamura 1975; Rosch 1997; Pickering 1997).

Questions as to whether, and how, I might use writing to illuminate aspects of my process of invention, continue to play out in chapter/Strand Two; they turn under the surface of the text, informing its content and structure. I remind the reader of this, again, to highlight the fact that the writing, in this text-based research, has a number of roles and functions; it is variously one of the modes that I am using to help me to examine and reflect on my process of inventing original choreographic works and also an 'object' of research, in its own right.

In this second chapter/Strand questions pertinent to both the studio-based and the text-based research processes overlap more frequently than they did in chapter/Strand One; they pass through each other, woven into the heuristic frame in a pattern that is open-ended and emergent. This is how the whole is spun. An expert reader may feel from, time to time, the turning/circling movement of the dancer(s) in 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' echoed in the turning movements of the themes in the text-based strand, and vice-versa.

The writing, in chapter/ Strand Two, is not limited to the production of analytico-referential discourse alone but includes other genres or registers of writing in the first person, mostly drawn from journals. The aim in including these journal extracts is to reveal aspects of my choreographic process which may be overlooked, and indeed erased, if the focus of the research were only ideologically-driven interpretation – of the sort often produced through spectating - as such interpretations tend to highlight general issues and eliminate the identity of the individual interpreter along with the notion of individual signature and invention. Additionally, in chapter/Strand Two, I begin to examine and reflect on 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' in more detail. I discuss them within the context of my overall choreographic practice

and refer to the latter's relationship to development of contemporary dance in Ireland and the wider international community of professional dance practitioners.

The third chapter/Strand focuses more specifically on epistemic questions and the practitioner-researcher. Here I argue that whilst I have at my disposal and can draw, where appropriate, on my 'expert-disciplinary mastery' (Melrose 2003) of modes and methods of inquiry appropriated from a range of sources outlined in the preceding chapter/Strand I must nonetheless be prepared, in the process of invention and expert inquiry, to go beyond what I know as a practicing artist. I examine and reflect in this chapter/ Strand on how my commitment to expand into the space of 'not-knowing' requires me to relinquish, at certain stages in the process of invention, not only *what*, but indeed *how* I know, while in apparent contradiction my expert judgment as an artist remains alert. It reveals why the modes and methods of inquiry that I use to invent each choreographic work can never be entirely predetermined, why each choreographic work - or 'choreographic-theoretical model' - inescapably requires me simultaneously to find both the sensation/question, *and* the method by which it can be made manifest; both emerge and are progressively articulated in the process of invention.

New dimensions to questions raised in the preceding sections emerge identifiable in terms of what Massumi (2002) has called thematic strands or threads. As a result, the writing in this third chapter/Strand does not echo what Chandler describes as the 'closed textual structures' of conventional academic writing, which he argues, use univocal textural closure as a way of both controlling the reader and subordinating the topic to the author's purposes (Chandler 2006). Instead we are dealing with a number of layers, each bringing its own presentational difficulties to the present project. Indicatively, I examine and reflect on my need, as an artist, to follow sensations in the making, rather than a specific methodological formula. Similarly I signal the importance of this mode of knowledge to art-making referring, from time to time, to the specific examples drawn from the process of inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH'. To describe these processes I borrow from practice theorist Knorr Cetina (2001) the notion that sensing, a productive mechanism in the making, might constitute a 'knowledge practice' in art-making-

In this chapter/Strand I review past choreographic works, beginning with the first solo, 'Search', that I choreographed and performed in 1983. I examine and reflect on how some of the themes/sensations explored in this choreography re-surfaced in 'Audience (1) Waltzers' making reference, as appropriate, to photographic images relating to the two productions. In considering my relationship with the finished choreographies that comprise my body of work I borrow again from Knorr Cetina's (2001) research into the reflexive and affective properties in research itself and the sense of longing at play in the relationship between researcher and research 'object' in epistemic practices (or 'knowledge practices'). Viewed from this perspective my relationship as practitioner with my body of work becomes more fully revealed in terms of its status as research-driven, creative and expert. Each 'finished' choreography functions as a 'punctuation' in the flow of my overall practice and as a resistive research 'object' against which I can push in my desire to satisfy the research drive (Knorr Cetina 2001).

In chapter/Strand Three I ask if, and how, writing might play its part in enabling me to dance beyond *what,* and indeed *how,* I 'know' in my process of invention: one of my aims in clarifying and making apparent/transparent the known elements of my process of invention (in chapter/Strand Two) was to the end of preparing the ground, clearing the space, for new and not-yet-known aspects of my choreographic practice to emerge, to be found.

In this third chapter/Strand reflections about writing become refracted through reflections on the word choreography, literally 'dance writing' –or dance's graphics. Reflections on May's argument (1997) that creativity requires courage are refracted through reflections on the root of the word courage, stemming from the French word *coeur* meaning heart. Reflections on the word heart are, in turn, refracted through reflections on somatic principles/perspectives (first introduced in chapter/Strand Two and further developed here); May's account of creativity and courage turns alongside Hartley's (1995) account of the relationship between the heart, the central organ of the circulatory system in the body, and the other body systems. Drawing here on the Platonic concept of Chora (Derrida 1987, cited in Ulmer 1994) and also circling back to weave in some thematic threads from chapter/Strand Two, I imagine Chora as the

spacious consciousness of Shunyatha which is, according to Buddhist tradition, empty of 'I' and empty of 'other': it is absolutely empty, revealing that 'I', the choreographer and performer, that knows and un-knows (it is constitutively complex and can be contradictory) feels the intensity of both longing and resistance that the risk of a temporary loss of identity that 'letting go' invites (Clement 1994) and indeed requires at certain decision-making moments in each process of invention. The photographic images of the live performance of 'Audience (1) Waltzers', included in this chapter/Strand, are intended to evoke a sense of this turning dance at the heart of which the audience sit.

At the beginning of the fourth and final chapter/Strand I circle back in time to examine and reflect on the very early stages of the process of inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', when the impulses/ideas driving this work were very raw, before they began to take the shape of a choreographic idea. I describe how some burning resistances to what I sensed as the limitations of certain performance conventions, specifically the relationship between audience and performers as configured in proscenium arch settings, fuelled my desire to explore other choreographic options. I argue that the proscenium arch type configuration favours a particular type of visual engagement by the audience whilst I was interested in exploring whether by choreographing a work for a different environment I might better be able to provide for the audience to have a somatic experience of dance and of the space within which it unfolds in performance. I discuss how these impulses/ideas were developed by being progressively modulated through a number of complex relational circumstances which required that I consider how each piece might work in my terms, in those of the audience and in its own terms by which I mean the terms of the materials of the choreography.

In this fourth chapter/Strand, I also look back at 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' as completed choreographies and signal how each of these works demonstrates a desire, in the choreographer, to provide for audiences to have an intimate/somatic experience of dance/Dance. Then referring specifically to 'Return Journey' I discuss how the experience of performing this work provided me, on one occasion, with an opportunity to become aware of the subtle ways in which an

intimate/somatic relationship between dancer/dance/Dance/audience might circulate in performance. I lightly wrap the words 'somatically-revolving-empathy' around this experience and I set out to clarify what I mean by this term by pushing against to the notion of 'kinaesthetic empathy', a field that is currently generating much interdisciplinary research across the fields of dance, philosophy and science (Calvo-Merino et al 2005; Stevens et al 2010; Hagendoorn 2004; Leigh-Foster 2010). The outcomes of a research undertaking, which measured the Mirror Neuron MNS activity of professional dancers as they watched a series of dance movements, proves to be particularly relevant to my inquiry: it importantly helps me to clarify my notion of 'somatically-revolving-empathy' and to distinguish my inquiry from that which investigates the notion of 'kinaesthetic-empathy' through measuring MNS activity as did neuro-scientists at the Royal Ballet (Clavo-Merino, Glaser, Grezes, Passingham and Haggard 2005).

As this fourth chapter/Strand draws to a conclusion 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'HaH' and 'Return Journey', are discussed, in Knorr Cetina's terms (2002), as unfolding structures of absences that provide, through the sensations/questions they generate, for continuation of my epistemic practice.

DVD

Return Journey

HaH

Choreography: Mary Nunan

Strand 1

In this first Strand of text I am setting out to argue that my choreographic and performance practice is 'theory' producing. I begin with an examination of the etymology of the word which has origins in the Greek words *theoria, theoerin* or *theoros*, defined respectively as 'to consider, speculate, look at', speculating and looking at not limited, in this context, to seeing with the eyes, (the Greek word for exclusively optic perception is *opsis*) but including a complex mode of active observation and contemplation, with a focus, it is suggested, in some instances, on contemplating the divine. In its early usage, the word 'theory' implied, according to Walter, 'a holistic practice of thoughtful awareness that engaged all senses and feelings' (Walter 1988, p.19).

The first recorded theorist in Western history was a man called Solon, who lived in Athens around 590 BC (Walter 1988, p.18). Solon, like all the other theorists since this time, was an institutionally authorised witness (Ulmer 1994). Accounts of the first *theoria* (individuals bore the title of *theoros* and collectively they constituted a *theoria*) describe them as 'tourists' or wise men whose role required them to travel to distant places to witness specific occurrences and to then return home to present their 'findings' through live performances and ritualised events (Godzich 1986, cited in Ulmer 1994, p.120). At every stage of their investigations, and in performing their findings, the *theoria* were expected to engage all their senses and act with a receptivity to 'every kind of emotional, cognitive, symbolic, imaginative and sensory experience' (Burnet 1957**,** cited in Ulmer 1994, p.121).

In 1613, as the purpose and function of research became increasingly defined and determined by institutional/ideological biases in favour of scientific research, the word 'theory' became re-defined as a set of 'principles or methods of a science, or art (rather than its practice)'.[3] This new definition of the word which clearly separates 'theory' from 'practice' reflects the polarities foundational to Cartesian

dualism, which were interpreted as positing that two distinct and mutually exclusive aspects of human experience, mind and body, existed as parallel, but independent 'worlds' that could each be studied without reference to the other. Cartesian logic has since this time provided the disciplines of science and philosophy, which represent themselves as dealing with the products 'minds' rather than 'bodies', with a rationale for producing 'theories' by directly linking, scientific and philosophical observations to linguistic categorisations (Biagioli 1995)[4]. This has resulted in writing becoming privileged as a mode of knowledge production in academic research and perceived as synonymous with what is understood by many of those who use the word 'theory'. (In other words, as Melrose argues, 'theory' supposes certain sorts of registers of writing-based enquiry.) The other half of Descartes' binary paradigm, 'the body', when separated in this way from the 'mind' (similarly a heavily-encrusted metaphor) is, according to dance artist/choreographer and scholar Leigh-Foster, viewed as a research topic, conceptualized as an object and construed as an 'index of forces that act upon and through it' (Leigh Foster 1995, p.11).

Leigh-Foster argues that in its reification as a topic of research, 'the body shares with women, racial minorities, colonized peoples, gays and lesbians, and other marginalised groups the scorn and neglect of mainstream scholarship' (Leigh-Foster 1995, p.11). The neglect of 'the body' in traditional scholarship can, according to her, be traced back to Plato's fantasy of heads unencumbered by limbs and torso or by the 'beast tethered just beneath the diaphragm', a fantasy which, she argues, still perseveres as a guiding image in the strategies that have neglected 'the body' as such in academic research (Leigh- Foster 1995, p.11).

Such neglect continues, I argue, despite the recent proliferation of research into conceptualizations of embodiment provided by feminist, postmodern, post-structural and psychoanalytic perspectives, not least because these theorizations of 'the body', being underpinned by the paradigmatic perspectives outlined above and enacted through writing, are inevitably and ironically bound by the 1613 definition of the word 'theory'. These research undertakings therefore also serve, I argue, despite the many valuable insights that they provide into 'the body' - the corporeal body, the phenomenological body, the inscribed body, the politicized body, the signified body

and the sexualized body - to protect and propagate, the positivist view of objectivity and the legacy of 'scientific oppression' (Halpin1989, cited in Leavy 2009, p.8) deeply embedded in the binaries of 'mind/body' and 'theory/practice' that have become foundational to knowledge production in the academy and more widely. Ironically, I would add, attempts to protest 'the body's' neglect through 'writerly' (Melrose 2003)[5] critiques of canonical scholarship therefore tend to reinforce, by default, the 'theoretical' notion (and fantasy) that the living and indeed lived 'body' – e.g. 'my body as dancer' - is separable from the 'mind'.

What is of concern for this particular research undertaking is not so much the neglect of 'the body' per se (which may seem strange, given that its primary focus is to examine and reflect on the process of creating and performing original choreographic works)[6], but rather the neglect of modes of knowledge production that are not articulated in certain registers of writing. This is not a refusal to accept that 'the body' has been neglected, it is rather a refusal to structure this research undertaking according to the binary paradigm that categorizes 'body' as separate from 'mind', even if it remains the case that what is submitted here combines writing and choreographic material. The argument that my choreographic practice might be 'theory-producing' is, instead, based on a return to the etymological root of the word, which signals no such binary distinctions. I am inspired here by the argument from Physicist Bohm[7] (Bohm 1980, p.17)

> that we should consider that our theories are not descriptions of reality as 'is' but, rather ever changing forms of insight, which can point to or indicate a reality that is implicit and not describable or specifiable in its totality.

And I am therefore setting out to examine, and reflect on, my choreographic 'theoretical production' as forms of insight, i.e. ways of looking at the world, rather then as ontological assertions about how the world 'is'.

In the interdisciplinary, interpraxiological[8], mixed-mode heuristic[9] framework that I am designing to support this research undertaking both the studio-based and the text-based strands of inquiry are integrated, as strands of complementary epistemic value and function. The framework therefore includes modes and methods of inquiry

drawn from the tradition of Western contemporary and post-modern choreography and dance performance, the Somatic practices of Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement and the Buddhist practice of Mindfulness Meditation: each strongly informs my studio-based process of invention by functioning as 'critical-meta practices' defined by Melrose (2003)

> as a disciplinary practice or practices which both maintain conventions specific to the discipline (and the judgments it entails) while challenging and/or interrogating certain of is practice.

Curiously in the text-based strand of this research these 'critical meta-practices' will also be simultaneously investigated as research 'objects' or epistemic practices.

In addition, the heuristic framework includes conventionally-understood theoretical perspectives selectively borrowed from Philosophy, Practice Theory, Cognitive Science, Performance Studies and Dance Studies, which are integrated into the text-based strand of the present research undertaking, in order to allow me to extend my investigation into specific questions/sensations that arise in the studio-based practice.

It is, perhaps, important to note here, with specific reference to the text-based strand of this research undertaking that although the word 'text' can, since post-structuralism,[10] be understood as a technical term to indicate the communicative content of an all-inclusive array of cultural expressions and social practices, that interpretation is not included in the present research context. In recent years, this wider definition of the concept of 'text', has been used by many dance scholars to challenge previously held assumptions that 'texts' must be written and to demonstrate that visual, temporal and non-written 'text' such as dance and choreography can provide material for critical analyses on issues of gender, culture, visuality and the gaze, amongst others, from a number of theoretical perspectives (Goellener and Shea Murphy 1995).

This wider interpretation of the concept of 'text' has provided the theoretical basis for research into dance *as* text, reading particular dances, and dance in general, for the theoretical/cultural/political concepts embedded (or embodied) in them. It also

facilitates research into dance *in* texts - fictional, dramatic and filmic - and research into how dance has been used by literary theorists as a vehicle for developing or explaining theories about writing. Therefore, bearing in mind Melrose's warning (2002, 2003, 2005, 2007)[11] that the term still brings with it understandings and associations that might not be useful to my arguments here, it needs to be emphasised that the word 'text' is used, in context of this research undertaking, to refer specifically to my examination as to *if,* and *how* aspects of my choreographic/epistemic practice might be clarified and reflected through engagement with the practice of writing, reading, words. To that end, one of the aims of this practice-based research is to investigate how 'text'/writing, reading, words, might be more fully integrated[12] into the overall choreographic practice to illuminate aspects of my process of invention.

The question of writing and the role and function of writing in arts practice was much debated[13] when national guidelines for practice-based research in performance, at higher degree level, were first being established in UK[14] in the late 1990s (Painter 1996; White 2000; Candalin 2000; Piccini 2002; Melrose 2002, 2003; Pakes 2003, 2004; Jones 2004; Elkins 2004). Although, it was just one of a number of academic/creative questions[15] that the academy had to address in drawing up these guidelines, the question of writing proved, I would argue, to be the most complex and the most controversial. Much of this controversy was generated in response to the requirement, still in existence, issued in 1998 by the then Arts and Humanities Research Board (now Research Council)[16] that performance processes and their outcomes could be considered 'on their own terms as part of a doctoral submission, only if they are contextualised by being accompanied by a written commentary of appropriate length and function.'

Many argued that this requirement was put in place to compensate for the uncertainty that prevailed within the academy, as to whether, and indeed how, performance processes and practices could be considered as arenas in which knowledge could be produced and researched as such. Additionally, it was argued that in requiring arts practitioners to write about their practice, the academy was not only failing to recognise that practice can be both a form of research, as well as a

legitimate way of making the findings of such research publicly available but also failing to recognise writing's potential, because of its privileged status as a mode of knowledge production, to further undermine the epistemic status of arts practices. The complexity of these issues is such that they continue to be the subject of much debate within the academy (Painter 1996; White 2000; Candalin 2000; Melrose 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007; Jones 2004; Elkins 2004; Pakes 2003, 2004).

When I first entered the academy as a mature artist (appendix i) to undertake a practice-based examination of my own choreographic practice I was not initially perturbed by this requirement, not least because a significant part of my decision to undertake this research was, in the first instance, precisely so that I could investigate aspects of it from other theoretical perspectives, specifically those formulated in writing. However, as my understanding of the substantive artistic and epistemic issues (lurking under what had initially appeared to me as a relatively benign requirement) grew, the complexity of this task became apparent. Therefore, before progressing with the research I first had to develop an understanding of what is argued to be the inequitable knowledge producing status of text-based and studio-based research processes within the academy, so as to ensure that the introduction of writing would not cause my research undertaking to split, by default, into the unhelpful binary and hierarchical categorisations of 'theory and practice'.

The difficulty with the concept 'theory and practice', particularly in practice-based research, is that it not only asserts a hierarchical relationship between these two elements, but also necessitates, according to Melrose (2003), a structure which

> asserts the pre-existence of an imaginary and conservatively regulated, scriptural world of writing within which two modes of complex practice are separated out, categorized and opposed.

The problem in separating out the text-based from the studio based strands of my research in this way is that it would have, I would argue, caused many aspects of my research to become inappropriately either 'lumped' or 'split'. According to Galin, whose research interests include an investigation of the dialogue between Buddhism

and Western science[17], to 'lump' is to ignore some distinctions as negligible, to 'split' is to ignore some relations as negligible:

> Both lumping and splitting create discrete entities useful for manipulating, predicting and controlling at the sensori-motor level and at abstract levels too. Unfortunately, they may impose ad hoc boundaries on what are actually densely interconnected systems and then grant autonomous existence to the segments (Galin 2003, p.108).

Galin argues that humans tend to 'lump' and 'split' in order to seek, find, or project a simplifying pattern to approximate complex processes. Were I to 'lump' and 'split' this research activity into two separate components it would cause it to become by default, I argue, delimited, separated yet and simultaneously co-joined into the hierarchical relationships inherent in the categorization 'theory and practice'. This in turn would have had, in my argument, the effect of inhibiting it by simultaneously complicating and paradoxically oversimplifying the relationship between its studio-based and text-based components.

Melrose suggests that the term 'theory and practice' is a skeuomorph, a term she draws from Katherine Hayles' writings on cybernetics, which describes a 'design feature that is no longer functional in itself [that] refers back to a feature that was functional at an earlier time' (Hayles 1999, cited Melrose 2003).[18] According to Melrose the continuing use of the skeuomorphic term 'theory and practice' presents us with an ideologically-charged threshold that needs to be crossed if we are to engage in mixed-mode arts-disciplinary theoretical practices (Melrose 2003) – some of which are choreographic.

> I want to affirm that within our individual selves we can reconcile two orders of knowledge which we might call practical and poetic; to affirm also that each form of knowledge redresses the other and that the frontier between them is there for the crossing (Heaney 1995, p.203).

This research undertaking requires me, I am arguing here, to attempt this crossing as part of my investigations into if, and how, the studio-based and text-based strands of

this inquiry might be integrated non-hierarchically as strands of equal epistemic status within this mixed-mode heuristic. I begin by addressing the issues that cluster around the 'privileging' of writing in knowledge production in the academy.

Conventional academic writing in both quantitative and qualitative research has been used almost exclusively within the logocentric 'scriptural economies'[19] of the academy to propagate the concept of knowledge as that which is produced by the 'writerly' (Melrose 2003) methodologies which define these paradigmatic perspectives (Melrose 2003; Ulmer 1989, 1994). As a result, formal academic writing and the knowledge it produces tends to propagate not only 'the traditional supremacy of the authorial voice' (Ostrow 1998, p.xii), but also the 'highly conservative philosophical matrixes' (Melrose 2003) foundational to quantitative and qualitative research paradigms themselves (Melrose 2002, 2003; Ulmer 1994). The symbiotic relationship and circular link between both of these two knowledge-producing paradigms and conventional academic writing is one, which according to Bannerman,

> asserts the primacy of words, as well as a fixed and concretised relationship between theory and practice, a relationship that also implies conscious theory versus inchoate practice (Bannerman 2006, p.16).

If the text-based strand of this practice-led research undertaking were to be underpinned by either quantitative or qualitative research methodologies it too would inevitably become, I argue, thus split.

Historically the splitting of research into binary categorisations of 'theory and practice', 'mind and body', 'subject and object' in quantitative research evolved as a methodological response to the Positivist paradigm which holds that reality consists of knowable 'truths' to be discovered, measured and controlled by objective means, by neutral observers. However this analytic model is now perceived, even within scientific research, as being problematic in that it distinguishes and separates two dimensions of science that should be kept unified - discovery and justification (Feyerabend 1975, cited in Ulmer 1989, p. 29).

According to Bohm, scientific research increasingly demands 'a new non-fragmentary worldview, in the sense that the present approach of analysis of the world into independently existent parts does not work well in modern physics' (1980, p.xi). His argument is that the proper operation of the mind requires an overall grasp of what is generally known, not only in formal, logical and mathematical terms but intuitively in images, feelings, poetic uses of language etc. (Bohm1980, cited in Walter 1988, p.17). However, notwithstanding the fact that in Bohm's view, this kind of thinking would provide 'a fertile source of new theoretical ideas' (Bohm 1980, cited in Walter 1988, p.17) it may take some time, I would argue, before scientific research can explicitly provide for such apparently radical methodological developments.

The qualitative research paradigm, on the other hand, is generally recognised as having evolved as major ontological, epistemological and methodological challenge to the quantitative research paradigm. The former includes methodologies that provide for researchers to engage with research participants on both an emotional and intellectual level and for the inclusion of images, sense data, feelings and poetic uses of language as an integral part of knowledge producing processes, perhaps most notably in the 'thick descriptions' (Geertz 1973) of ethnographic and auto ethnographic research.

The qualitative paradigm emerged not only from challenges to positivist assumptions about 'truth' as something which can only be discovered by a neutral observer, but also provided for voices/perspectives, considered previously excluded in quantitative research to find meaningful inclusion (Leavy 2009). In addition qualitative research has also provided for critical discourse about the power structures inherent in knowledge producing processes through examining such issues as authority, agency, disclosure, representation and reflexivity. However, despite the fact that the qualitative research paradigm has, through these developments, provided for many previously 'unheard' voices to be meaningfully included, it has not yet been extended, I would argue, to include those voices that emerge through epistemic processes that are not governed by critical analytical reasoning – conventional

analysis, interpretative and comparative scholarship - propagated by the logic and values specific to conventional academic writing.

Hence despite the on-going attempts to renegotiate and extend the boundaries of quantitative and qualitative research, including attempts to reject and subvert oppressive power relations it is, I would argue, ironic that the hierarchical relationship inherent in the binary categorizations, 'theory and practice', 'subject and object' and 'mind and body', foundational to both these paradigmatic perspectives remains firmly intact not least because their respective methodologies are ideologically determined and fundamentally delimited by the linear causal logic of conventional academic writing. This has, in turn, led to the situation whereby knowledge produced through writing is privileged over knowledge produced through performance making. The latter has, as a result, tended to be at best marginalized, if not excluded, from consideration as a knowledge category within the academy (White 2000; Candalin 2000; Piccini 2002; Melrose 2002, 2003; Elkins 2004; Jones 2004; Pakes 2003, 2004). This has resulted in an ironic 'twist', as opposed to a 'turn' in theory production, whereby original choreographic works can be investigated as objects of research through methodologies appropriated from 'writerly' theoretical/disciplinary paradigms, whilst the theoretical/disciplinary-specific modes and methods of inquiry, leading to the invention of these performance 'objects' are not, as yet, fully recognised, within the academy, as knowledge producing processes in their own right.

According to Ulmer (1994), citing Derrida (1987) the academy accepts almost any topic as an object of study but tends to represent this study only in the form of conventional academic writing. In privileging conventional academic writing in this way the academy is, according to Ulmer, at the very least propagating and perhaps even protecting its own ideological biases. He argues that the growth of knowledge, in the academy, is not only a matter of content but presupposes certain processes which are related to modes of communication, specifically the apparatus[20] of the alphabet. According to Groody there is a 'direct correlation between the properties of alphabetic writing and critical analytical thinking' (Groody 1977, cited in Ulmer 1989, p.2). He argues that conventions refined by the special relationship between

the apparatus of the alphabet and critical-analytical thinking are not only privileged, but have came to function within the academy as norms of thought, and indeed as logic itself, and as the standard by which other knowledge producing processes are measured and evaluated. These circumstances may, I would argue, go some way towards explaining why the limitations and also the limited applications of this apparatus in certain modes of knowledge production within the academy are in fact difficult to challenge.

Had the primary focus of this research been to examine one, or indeed any number, of my 'finished' choreographies in detail, or to produce a written theory *about* Dance, Choreography or Performance in general, there may have been less need for me to question the appropriateness of the apparatus of the alphabet or the logic of conventional academic writing that it produces. This apparatus has after all provided for the ever-widening range and depth of dance scholarship undertaken in the burgeoning field of Dance Studies in recent years, and can cater well for researchers who have no need to be professional artists. Conventional academic writing, underpinned by methodologies and conceptual constructs appropriated from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives including new historicism, post-structuralism, critical theory, literary theory, literary studies, gender and queer theories, multiculturalism and film theory, supports the production of important scholarly research in dance. It also provides for research into such 'critical-theoretical' themes as 'bodily' subjection, disciplining, colonization, mobilization and agency and for choreography and dance to be examined as a theorization of the relationships between body and self, gender, desire, individuality, community, nationality and now increasingly kinesthesia and consciousness (Banes 1987,1993, 1994; Daly 1991; Goellener and Shea Murphy 1995; Carter 1998; Fraleigh and Hanstein 1999; Dills and Albright 2001; Desmond 2003; Leigh Foster 1995, 1996, 2009, 2010; Pakes 2003, 2004; Sheets Johnson 1984, 2011).

In addition, much valuable research in the field of Dance Studies has been undertaken by those scholars who wish to emphasise bodily movement rather than 'the body' and bodily representation in their research. Laban Movement Analysis (LMA)[21], which developed out of Laban's analysis of 20th century European

movement patterns, is one of the tools that most scholars use for this purpose. However, there is, according to Desmond, a need to generate more tools for close reading if we are to keep analysis anchored in the materiality and kinesthesia of the dancing body. She argues that no one system of analysis will suffice and that more sophisticated methodologies are needed for the purpose of 'shuttling back and forth between the micro (physical) and macro (historical, ideological) levels of movement investigation' (Desmond 1997, p.50). The use of new technologies, perhaps most notably by choreographer William Forsythe[22], has however greatly expanded the potential application of LMA suggesting, I would argue, that the lack of 'sophistication' to which Desmond refers is perhaps more reflective of the limitations of the apparatus of the alphabet in capturing and recording the detail of movement and choreographic organization rather than the limitations of Laban's system of analysis per se.

Discourse about value and the limitations of appropriating, and indeed privileging, methodologies from other theoretical paradigms to enable interpretation of choreography and dance, has, according to Carter, been partly responsible for much of the latent development of Dance Studies in its early years (Carter1998).[23] It has been argued that because dance, considered by many to be 'an emerging discipline in which the epistemological ground is still contested and shifting' (Pakes 2003, p.129), is struggling to find a theoretical language of its own, it has much to benefit from the theoretical rigour that these other disciplines offer. The counter-argument to this stance, made with particular reference to practice-based higher degree research, is that the appropriation of methodologies and representations, from other disciplinary perspectives to account for the process of creating original choreographic works, is a central and critical problematic (Melrose 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007; Bannerman 2006; Dempster1998; Pakes 2003, 2004). Melrose has indeed argued that the desired rigour is already to be found in professional choreographic enquiry, interrogative in kind, in the hands of certain expert practitioners (Butcher and Melrose (eds) 2005).

Melrose also argues, that whilst the appropriation of theoretical paradigms might be valuable in producing 'spectatorial' insights on performance output, they are

nonetheless limited and limiting, for practitioners who wish to examine their own practice. She has consistently cautioned (Melrose 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007) against the assumption that appropriation of theoretical paradigms and methodologies underpinning traditional text based reason and logic, can provide methods of inquiry towards researching the *process* of creating work:

> In addition, I would argue that those who practice spectator studies only see *what spectators can see*. And they tend then to reproduce, often implicitly, the schematic circumstances that stage that insight - as though these limited circumstances might account for performance practices themselves. What spectators *can see*, generally speaking, and attempt to reproduce in words - as though this might account for the operations of performance - is their own relationship to a performance product (Melrose 2002).

Because what 'spectators' see, and attempt to reproduce in words, is their relationship to a performance product, they can, according to Melrose, only infer or guess at performance-making processes through the precepts that are specific to their 'spectatorial' position (and are likely in so doing, to adopt a language specific to the visual). She argues that the academy, in requiring arts practitioners to examine their creative process through the application of 'spectator' paradigms, may well condemn them to 'inadequate' ways of knowing (Melrose 2002), not least because 'the factors involved in performance decision-making, as distinct from their outcome, are not available to 'spectating'' (Melrose 2002).

In recent (early) years of PaR many dance artists/scholars voiced their concerns about what they perceived as the 'inadequacy' of having to examine and account for their arts practice from the perspective of conceptual paradigms appropriated from disciplinary perspectives predicated on the logic of conventional academic writing[24]. Some dance scholars also argued that the appropriation of theoretical frames from these disciplines could lead to dance being used simply to support pre-existing arguments or paradigms (Carter 1998), and/or to dance being 'colonized' by the word (Dempster 1988). However, in recent years a growing number of choreographers/performers have produced writings in which their 'academic' voice is expressly integrated in their research in order to identify and apply philosophical

written theories into their practice (Claid 1998; Sanchez Colberg 1992; Rubidge 2000; Gilson-Ellis 2000; Reeves 2009)[25]. Claid argues that she includes the former to illustrate how 'dance and written languages can inform one another and how theories and philosophies can exist in parallel to embodied forms' (Claid 2006, p.8). And yet, despite recent developments in many aspects of practice-based research there remains, to date, a dearth of 'alternative' formal academic research models to support artists in examining and reflecting on, through writing, the practice-theoretical underpinnings of their own creative, epistemic *process* of invention (Bannerman 2006).

Therefore my aim, borne out of necessity, is to invent a heuristic (or apparatus) to support me to observe (which is importantly different than 'spectate' in the sense that Melrose intends the concept) the process of inventing the three choreographic works at the centre of this research undertaking: 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH'. This heuristic (apparatus) comprises studio-based and text-based strands inquiry, both of which are strongly informed by my 'expert, arts-disciplinary mastery' (Melrose 2003)[26] of methods and modes of inquiry appropriated from specific disciplinary practices.

It also includes experiments in new modes of academic writing, beyond those positioned on the side of already known methodologies towards modes of inquiry more suitable to discovery and to a 'theoretical curiosity' resonant with those proposed in Ulmer's heuretic pedagogic model 'mystory'[27] (Ulmer 1989, 1994). This latter model, which is predicated on what Ulmer argues are the crossing discourses that have been shown to occur in the process of invention, does not stop with analysis or comparative scholarship but conducts such scholarship in preparation for the design of a rhetoric/poetics leading to the production of new work (Ulmer 1994).

According to Ulmer it therefore contributes to what (Barthes 1972, cited in Ulmer 1994, p.4) refers to as the 'return of the poetician' – one who is concerned with how a work is *made.* As a model of invention 'mystory' highlights the importance of the avant-garde, not as an object of study, but as a liberal mode of research and experimentation in the generation of new practice-theoretical works. In so doing its

aim is to support students to approach knowledge from the side of *not knowing what it is*, that is, from the side of one who is learning, not from that of one who already knows (Ulmer 1989, 1994).

To approach the process of producing knowledge from the side of not knowing requires, I argue, in this practice-based research undertaking, a short-term and strategic suspension of the traditional knowledge producing paradigms and ideological biases which underpin qualitative and quantitative research in favour of a more open-ended investigative and reflective framework which can provide for the integration of both the studio-based and the text-based research processes as strands of equal epistemic status. In integrating these two strands in this way I am setting out to perform[28] the argument that the concept of theoretical-production be decoupled from the apparatus of the alphabet, on the basis of a practitioner's expertise in other modes of codification, so that the phenomenon of critical thinking, which I argue is achievable through other modes including dance and choreography, can be more fully recognised.

In arguing in terms appropriate to my disciplinary practice, that aims of critical thinking may also be achieved in a variety of media including choreography it is not my intention, and indeed it would be counter-productive in the context of this research undertaking, to either dismiss the 'logic' of conventional academic writing or to undermine the importance of theories/insights into dance, choreography and performance produced and propagated by the apparatus of the alphabet and distilled by engagement the academy's long established tradition of critical-analytical thinking.

On the contrary, I find scholarly accounts of the challenges clustering around practice-based research in dance, choreography and performance to be very illuminating; Pakes investigations into whether the nature of artistic insight (in practice-as-research) might be identified as *techne, phronesis, praxis and/ or poesis* gives me pause for much thought – the impact of her questions on my research is not less powerful for being indirect (Pakes 2003, 2004). Therefore, provision is made within this heuristic for engagement with theoretical paradigms appropriated from a

number of ‘writerly’ disciplinary fields; conventional academic writing is included to the extent that it might illuminate certain aspects of the process of invention, rather than to the end of theoretical-production that might be artificially detached from those processes.

My aim is to integrate writing as one of the strands of this heuristic frame, the logic of which is primarily determined by my ‘expert, arts-disciplinary mastery’ (Melrose 2003) of the modes and methods of inquiry underlying my choreographic and performance practice. The latter support me in thinking and acting ‘geometrically, diagrammatically, schematically and multi-dimensionally, rather than in the linear dominant mode bound-in to writing’ (Melrose 2005, p.182). Therefore, in this context the role and function of the apparatus of the alphabet, is not limited to the production and the propagation of analytico-referential discourse alone but includes other genres and registers of writing in first person registers. My writing, on that precise basis, also operates as a ‘writerly’ meta-practice, of wider implication than the choreographic circumstances of its making.

The heuristic framework also provides for the inclusion of journal extracts which evoke, and account for, experiences of present practice and for experiences of being present in the process of creating choreographic works before reflecting on it; to write the experience of reflective judgment/decision-making rather than write *about* the experience. Journals also play an important role in supporting me to record apparently unassociated and idiosyncratic ideas as they arise in my process of invention.

According to (Feyerabend 1975, cited in Ulmer 1989, p. 31):

> Reason grants that ideas, which we introduce in order to expand our knowledge, may arise in a very disorderly way and the origin of a particular point of view may depend on class prejudice, passion, personal idiosyncrasies, questions of style, and even error pure and simple.

In the journal I can let emerging and apparently unassociated ideas fall, as they will, albeit often untidily, onto the pages. In this way the journal should become, for a

sympathetic and informed reader, a giddy space of serendipitous possibility. The importance of this space is highlighted by Winnicott's argument that tidying up uncertain situations and unassociated ideas many be indicative of a failure to deal with the complexity of the world and a desire to assert the self, rather than reveal/discover it (Winnicott 1991, cited by Evans 2007)[29]. The journal provides me with time to linger before tidying.

The intention of threading journal extracts and writing from other genres through the other sub-strands of formal theoretical writing is to provide the possibility for new perspectives and new insights into patterns of reflective judgment/ decision-making to emerge by revealing aspects of my choreographic process which may be overlooked, and indeed erased, if the focus of the research were only ideological interpretations, as such interpretations tend to highlight general issues and eliminate the particular person. According to (Holten 1973, cited in Ulmer 1989, p.37):

> Just as there can be no creativity 'in general' nor any science without a discipline of expert knowledge, neither can there be any invention without the dimension of 'contingency' expressed in the oral life story.

In this research undertaking neither the studio-based process of inventing choreographic 'theoretical productions' nor the process of examining and reflecting on them in writing can, I argue, be underpinned by pre-determined, teleological qualitative and quantitative methodologies; the outcomes of both strands emerge instead from the non-linear, relational positioning and re-positioning of a number of carefully selected modes and methods of inquiry. This renders the overall research undertaking 'tele-illogical' (Ulmer 1989, p.19) by which I understand, goal directed but without knowing where it is going.

The structure and function of each of the specialized disciplinary processes which comprise this multi- layered interdisciplinary, interpraxiological mixed-mode heuristic research frame, and the relationship between them, might be best described through making an analogy with strands of activities that distinguish cellular specializations within the human body. This analogy serves, it seems to me, to evoke the machinations of a structure into which writing's processes can be integrated so

that they too can function somatically, as a node (or strand) within the overall practice. According to Somatic practitioner and Psychologist Hartley (1989):

> Some strands develop the ability to conduct nerve impulses, they grow long fibres that carry these messages to other parts of the body; they become part of the highly complex and sophisticated nervous system. Other cells are able to control the deposition of calcium in the bones and they become part of the skeletal system. Connective tissue cells produce elongated fibres that interweave to create mesh-like connecting networks. The actual structure of each group of specialised cells both reflects and determines its function, such as the elastic, fibrous bands of muscle cells arranged in parallel bundles (Hartley 1989, p.7).

Just as the actual structure of specialised cells reflects and determines their functioning within the living human organism, so too the 'structure' of each discipline, practice, mode and method of inquiry that comprises the two primary strands (and many sub-strands) of this research undertaking, reflects and determines their function within the frame. Just as cellular specialisations within the body have their own distinguishing features, each strand of this research activity has its own distinguishing features and boundaries, defined by its unique mode and method of inquiry. And just as, within the living organism, no one strand of cellular activity can account for or express the totality of cellular functioning, so too within the process of inventing original choreographic work, no one mode or method of inquiry can, alone, account for the operations of reflective judgment/decision-making in the process of invention. However, by clarifying the distinct and distinctive role and function of the methods and modes of inquiry underlying my studio-based practice my aim is to make more transparent the operations of decision-making in my process of invention and to simultaneously evolve a replicable heuristic model, to include writing, to support future choreographic processes.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

"Search" (1983)
Choreography and Performance: Mary Nunan
Photography: Amelia Stein

Figure 5

Left: Robert Connor and Mary Nunan

Below: Joan Davis, Loretta Yurick, Mary Nunan and Robert Connor

Figure 6

Figure 7

"Lunar Parables" (1984)
Choreography: Sara and Jenny Pearson
Dancers: Loretta Yurick, Joan Davis, Robert Connor and Mary Nunan

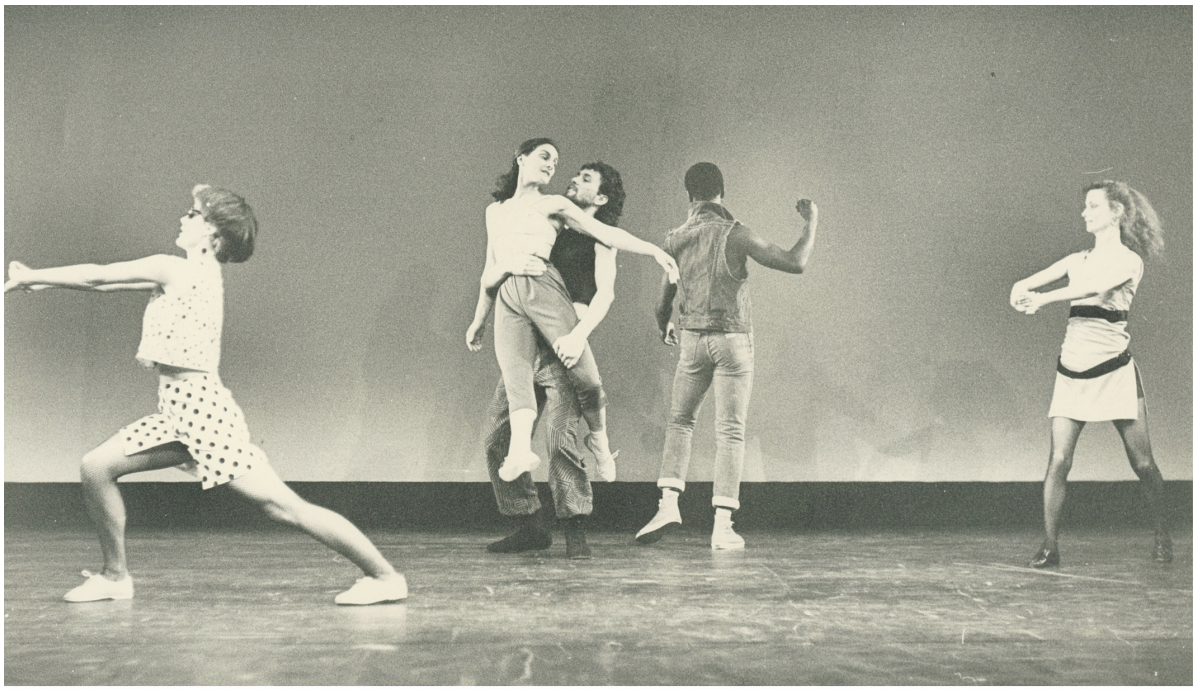

Figure 8

"Title Unknown" (1985)
Choreography: Martha Renzi
Above: Mary Nunan, Joan Davis, Robert Connor, Tony Pinder and Loretta Yurick.
Below: Loretta Yurick, Robert Connor, Joan Davis, Mary Nunan and Tony Pinder

Figure 9

Figure 10

"Free Fall" (1985)

Choreography: Mark Taylor

Above:
Mary Nunan, Robert Connor and Joan Davis.

Right:
Mary Nunan

Figure 11

Figure 12

Figure 13

“5 Car Pile Up” (1986) | Choreography: Yoshiko Chuma

Above Left: Mary Nunan and Paul Johnson.

Above Right: Loretta Yurick and Mary Nunan.

Below: Mary Nunan, Loretta Yurick, Robert Connor, Joan Davis and Paul Johnson.

Figure 14

Strand 2

In this strand of writing I am setting out to make more transparent the matrix of layered and overlapping, interdisciplinary and interpraxiological, modes and methods of inquiry, specifically those appropriated from the Erick Hawkins contemporary dance technique, the Somatic practice of Authentic Movement and Body-Mind Centering and the Buddhist practice of Mindfulness Meditation, that variously and collectively, directly and indirectly inform the operations of decision making in my process of invention. I am, in addition, simultaneously investigating if, and how, the practice of writing might support me to do this – investigating, that is, by enacting writing practices themselves.

The writing therefore has a number of functions and is operating on at least three, usually simultaneously occurring, levels. On one level it is continuing to support me to negotiate (as the text-based strand emerges into the form), the issues clustering around the privileged status of writing in knowledge production in the academy. On another, inter-related level, it is functioning simultaneously as both a research 'object' and a research mode, in that I am using writing to investigate if, and how, *process writing* might support me to examine, reflect on and clarify the relationship between specific aspects of the disciplinary practices underlying my primarily studio-based processes of invention. And at a third, also inter-related, level, the process of writing is supporting me to investigate, imagine and experiment with if, and how, writing might be used to illuminate some new aspects of the themes/ideas being explored in my process of invention. The relationship between these three layers and functions of writing is as interconnected and overlapping as the primarily studio-based practice on which I am setting out to examine and reflect: together, these feel membranous.

They feel membranous as does the relationship between the modes and methods of inquiry, appropriated from Hawkins' technique, the Somatic practices of Body-Mind

Centering and Authentic Movement and the practice of Mindfulness Meditation, which over a period of many years of sustained study and practice, have become an integral part of the schematics of my choreographic practice. Collectively, and variously, they contribute to the on-going refinement of my 'expert, arts-disciplinary mastery' (Melrose 2003) as a contemporary dancer, performer and choreographer and provide me with modes and methods of inquiry that support me in developing the non-linguistic 'qualitative reasoning' (Siegesmund 2004, p.80) processes and the 'research-professional intuitive operations' (Melrose 2003) underlying the decisions I make in the process of inventing original choreographic work.

I propose to begin by introducing these four disciplinary practices: the Erick Hawkins contemporary dance technique, which he developed in the 1950s, is part of the canon of Western Contemporary Dance techniques. One of Hawkins' expressed aims in developing his technique was to train dancers to regain consciousness of the sensation of the movement, to *be present with* the movement, to simply *do* the movement. According to Hawkins his technique supported dancers to 'return' to sensuousness, which he described as living in the 'now', where the 'body is a clear place' (Hawkins 1965,1992; Celichowska 2000). In his writings Hawkins points to Hubert Benoit's concept of 'coenesthesia'[30] (a word coined by the latter to indicate the total inner perception we have of our organism) as giving some description of what he was setting out to achieve as a teacher and choreographer.

Body-Mind Centering, developed by Bonnie Bainbridge-Cohen, is a Somatic practice which integrates the maps of Western Medicine and Science together with Eastern philosophies in its overall aim to provide for practitioners to become aware of the relationship between their body/mind and to act out of this awareness. As a practice it provides for both the cognitive and experiential learning of the body systems which Bainbridge-Cohen (1993) identifies as follows: the skeletal system, the ligamentous system, the muscular system, the organ system, the endocrine system, the nervous system, the fluid system, the fascial system, fat and skin. Body-Mind Centering aims to provide for both the cognitive and experiential learning of these systems to the end of supporting practitioners in becoming aware of the relationship between inner cellular movement and external expression of movement

through space; as a practice it sets out to provide, through 'somatization'[31] experiential learning and hands-on re-patterning, for this relationship to be nurtured as the foundation for integrated transformative experiences of both, as one (Bainbridge Cohen 1993).

Authentic Movement is also a Somatic practice. Its roots are in dance, healing practices and mysticism and its primary aim is to enable one to develop the capacity *to be present*, as a 'witness' (thereby recalling Solon, the first theorist, above) to the meanings, judgments and criticisms that one attaches to sensations experienced in the (that is, one's own) moving body. According to Adler, who developed the discipline of Authentic Movement and codified it as a technique, sensation can precede emotion, but in practice we are often not aware of such subtle distinctions. Through developing the inner 'witness' one can, she argues, become more conscious of that which the body/sensation knows directly. Within this discipline movement is not prescribed, instead it is discovered by the mover, as gestures, both cultural and idiosyncratic, emerge out of complex 'inner' experiences and find their way into consciousness and form. Adler posits that with growing awareness, developed through the practice of witnessing, the mover learns 'to distinguish between merging with her movement, being in dialogic relationship to it and in moments of grace, knowing a wholeness, feeling no separation between her moving self and her inner witness' (Adler 2002, p.6).

The practice of Mindfulness Meditation has its roots in Buddhism. Its primary aim, at both its simplest and most profound level, is to enable one to experience what one's mind and body are doing as they are doing it, *to be present with one's mind and body and energy* in their ordinary states of occurrence (Rosch 1997). Foundational to the study and practice of meditation is the distinction, made in Buddhism between, the 'knowing mind' (awareness) and the 'thinking mind (mental events). This distinction is crucial to understanding the highly technical, and often definitively different psychological, contextual and connotative meanings, intended by the use of the term 'mind' in Buddhist philosophy and psychology and its use in Western philosophy, psychology and science (Ray 2001, p.74). In practising Mindfulness Meditation one is not directed to examine or analyse the content of

thoughts and emotions (mental events) but rather to remain present with them with a broadened sense of knowing engendered by the focusing and relaxing of attention (Rosch 1997; Varela et al 1997; Wallace 1998; Sogyal Rinpoche 1992; Ray 2001).

It is important to note that the modes and methods of inquiry that underlie my choreographic/epistemic practices and inform my processes of invention cannot be reduced to those drawn from the above four disciplinary practices alone. My overall practice and each process of invention is more layered and complex than that.[32] What I am attempting here is not a reduction, per se, but rather to make more transparent how the relationship between some distinct and distinctive modes and methods appropriated from Hawkins contemporary dance technique, Body-Mind Centering, Authentic Movement and Mindfulness Meditation informs the schematics of my overall practice through supporting me in remaining *'present with'* experiences of movements, emotions and thoughts as they arise and inflect the operations of decision-making in my process of invention.

There are - at least on the surface - many apparent similarities in the expressed aim of the Hawkins contemporary dance technique, Body-Mind Centering, Authentic Movement and Mindfulness Meditation to support practitioners to be *'present with'* experiences of movement, emotion and thought. There are also fundamental differences between them that stem, in part, from the historical, cultural and ideological traditions from which they originated and which manifest, in part, through the distinctive modes and methods of inquiry and indeed the languages that they have each developed to achieve their respective aims. However, I am not setting out in this text-based strand of research to write a comparative study of these disciplinary practices; had this been the case the research would have needed, I argue, to be underpinned by at least one pre-determined methodological perspective, with writing functioning as the primary tool (apparatus) for analyzing, comparing and contrasting their similarities and differences. I am, instead setting out to highlight, in part through writing, the foundational ideological principles that define and underpin each of them, to the end of rendering more transparent their respective roles and functions in the always fluid, layered and overlapping schematics[33] of my overall, not-primarily-language-based, epistemic practice. And I am simultaneously

setting out to clarify how I apply their distinct and distinctive modes and methods of inquiry to support me in developing an increased awareness of patterns of intuitive and semi-intuitive relations that cluster around the decisions I make in each process of invention.

In my formative years as a dance artist I did not use a formal practice of writing to support me in investigating and/or reflecting on my dance and/or choreographic practice. At that time I was primarily focused on mastering the technical principles of Hawkins, and the other contemporary and post-modern dance techniques that I was studying, through studio-based practice alone. Despite the fact that it did not include a formal practice of writing this studio-based research process was nonetheless, I argue, a critical meta-practice, defined by Melrose (2002) as 'a disciplinary practice or practices, which both maintains conventions specific to the discipline (and the judgment it entails) while challenging and/or interrogating certain of its practices'. The process of mastering modes and methods of inquiry appropriated from Hawkins and other contemporary and post-modern dance techniques whilst simultaneously interrogating them occurred then, and continues to occur, in my practice through what Dempster posits as the processes of 'deconstruction' and 'bricolage'[34] widely associated with post-modern dance training (Dempster 1988).

Dempster's term 'deconstruction' is, according to Bales, analogous in post-modern dance training for re-patterning, stripping down, getting back to basics by 'debriefing' the body of unwanted habits (Dempster 1988, cited in Bales and Nettl-Fiol 2008). When the process of deconstruction includes yoga or somatic practices, the resulting experience can, according to Dempster, reflect both 'bricolage' and 'deconstruction', in that the somatic practices, when added, become a grounding element of the whole internally-differentiated training package (bricolage), whilst their application as part of the process of examining and re-visiting the practice may be deconstructive (Dempster 1988, cited in Bales and Nettl-Fiol 2008). Dempster's account largely echoes the process of 'deconstruction' and 'bricolage' which I have continued to refine in all aspects of my choreographic practice, with perhaps one subtle but, I argue, important difference: the primary focus of the methods and

modes of inquiry that I have appropriated and then adapted, to enable the process of 'deconstruction' in my practice, are those designed to *raise awareness of,* to develop mindfulness of, habitual patterns of the body and mind in movement. This is, I argue, an importantly different emphasis from that of '*debriefing*' the body of '*unwanted*' habits.

Why then, one might ask, am I throwing the cat of writing in amongst the fully-fledged pigeons, the critical-meta-processes, already at work in my practice? I might answer that I have had, for a number of years now, a sense that some of these critical-meta processes and modes and methods of inquiry were becoming entangled around each other and around the heart of my practice, which means once again that I am interested in examining and reflecting on how I might use writing to support me in investigating why, and how, this had happened and to simultaneously support me in making make my current process of invention more transparent to both the reader and to myself as practitioner-researcher.

My choreographic practice is one in which I, as artist, play two distinct and distinctive roles, that of dancer and choreographer. Although artists in this category are not an homogenous group and no two practices are the same, in every practice in which a choreographer plays these two roles their process of creating work, and the outcomes of this process, are both inevitably very much determined, I want to argue, by the relationship between them. In some instances, the relationship between dance training and choreography can be particularly obvious, as in the work of 20th century choreographer/dancers, including Graham, Cunningham, Hawkins, Humphries and Limon. Each of these artists developed codified dance techniques that, in turn, became one of the defining characteristics of their overall practice (Cohen 1966; Morrison Brown 1980; Novack 1990; Banes 1987, 1993). It is, I would argue, less obvious in the work of other seminal artists of the twentieth century, particularly the post-modern[35] experimentalists of Judson era, including Brown, Rainer and Paxton, many of whom rejected, artistically and ideologically, codified dance languages and formal dance technique training, in favour of 'pedestrian' movement.

Figure 15

“Teritorial Claims” (1993)
Choreography: Mary Nunan
Dancers: Clare O’Dea and Mary Nunan
Photography: Tom Short

Figure 16

Figure 17

"Teritorial Claims" (1993)
Choreography: Mary Nunan
Top: Megan Buchannan and Paris Payne
Bottom: Paul Johnson and Clare O'Dea
Photography: John Chomisky

Figure 18

Figure 19

"Teritorial Claims" (1993)
Choreography: Mary Nunan
Top: Megan Buchannan, Clare O'Dea and Paul Johnson
Bottom: Megan Buchannan, Clare O'Dea and Paris Payne
Photography: John Chomisky

Figure 20

Figure 21

"Fictional" (1994)
Choreography: Mary Nunan
Top: Gideon Reeves, Mary Nunan and Jean Hall
Bottom: Mary Nunan, Paul Johnson and Jean Hall
Photography: Tom Short

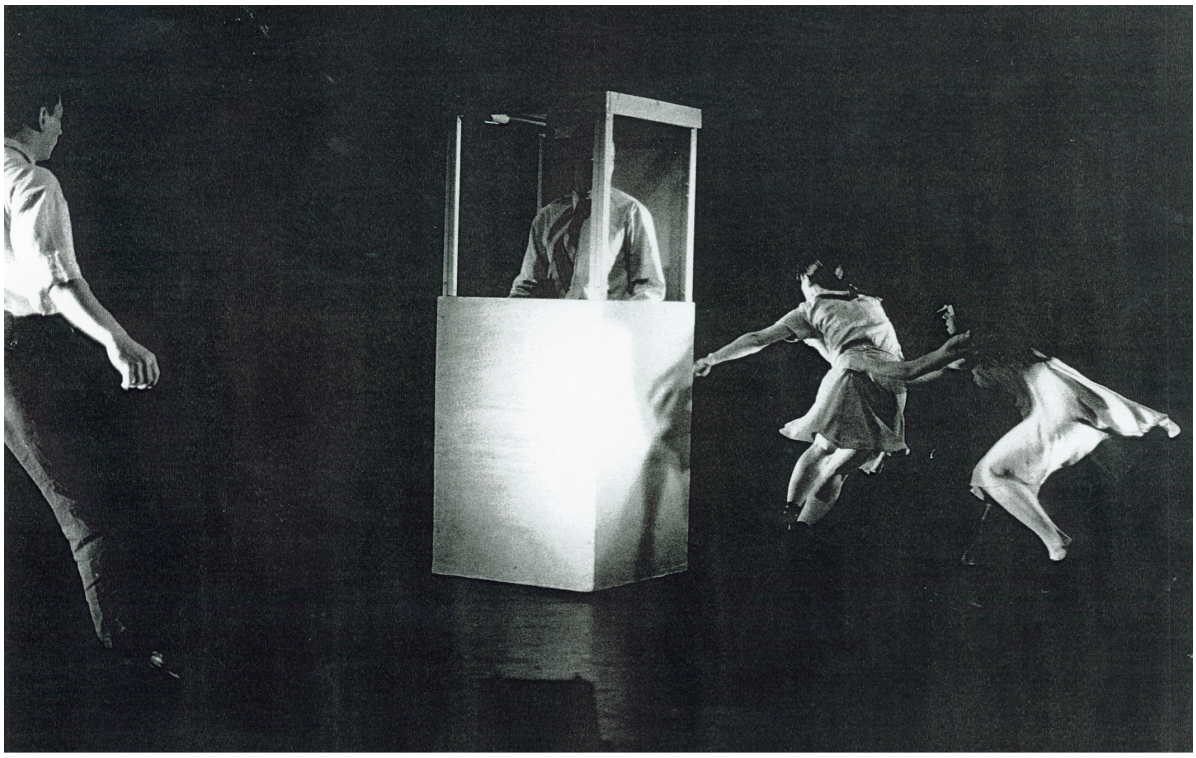

Figure 22

Figure 23

"Fictional" (1994)
Choreography: Mary Nunan
Top: Paul Johnson, Gideon Reeves, Mary Nunan and Jean Hall
Bottom: Gideon Reeves, Paul Johnson, Jean Hall and Mary Nunan
Photography: Tom Short

The Judson artists explored 'pedestrian' movements in their choreographic works and improvisational scores. (As Melrose has argued, even the pedestrian as aesthetic, however, in the case of the trained dancer, is characterized by a dancerly presence combined with the everyday producing an autoreflexive practitioner work that remains performative and is still widely
called 'dance'.)

Much of the work produced by the 'Judson' artists paralleled and reflected new approaches to dance technique training many of which represented a dramatic departure from the hegemony of models which emphasized vertical axis. It was during this period that traditional contemporary dance training techniques were, literally, turned on their head, perhaps most notably in the work of Steve Paxton, through his pioneering development of contact improvisation (Bales and Nettl-Fiol 2008; Novack 1990; Banes 1987; 1993)[36]. Further developments in dance technique training in the late 20th Century saw the link between dance training, choreography and performance going from being turned 'upside-down' to becoming increasingly turned 'inside-out' as somatic principles and practices became mainstream in formal dance training and also used as the foundation for creating choreographic and/or improvisational works (Hartley 1989; Collison 2005; Davis 2007; Franklin 1996; Olsen 1999; Bales and Nettl-Fiol 2008; Eddy 2009).

As a result of these developments in dance training, artists who currently both choreograph and perform their own work have a wide range of options from which to draw in linking and/or indeed separating their dance training from their choreographic practice. Many artists choose to make very direct links between these two elements of their practice, by creating works through a process of 'collaging and crafting' (Bales 2008, p.70) and/or improvising with codified techniques. Works that I choreographed from 1983 - 1999 (figs. 1-4 and figs. 15-42) could be broadly perceived as fitting into this category notwithstanding the fact that throughout the process of inventing them some of the movement material was also generated through more open-ended improvisatory processes, by which I mean improvisatory processes that are not predicated on the prescribed and stylized movement vocabulary of 'traditional' contemporary dance techniques. In the three works at the

centre of this research undertaking - 'Audience (1) Waltzers' (2007), 'Return Journey' (2008) and 'HaH' (2010) - the link with codified techniques is less immediately obvious not least because my process of invention had expanded, by this time, to include the Somatic practices of Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement.

These practices have had the effect of softening the hold that prescribed techniques had on my work prior to this time. However, irrespective of how direct, or indeed subtle and indirect the links may appear to be, my dual role as choreographer/dancer (and now researcher) strongly influences my decision-making processes and by default strongly determines, I would argue, the structure and content of my choreographic output.

> There is no shortcut to learning dancing. You have to get in there and step by step see how the thing feels (Hawkins 1992).

This step-by-step studio-based process of 'deconstruction' and 'bricolage' began for me long before I could name it as such. It began some years before I was introduced to the Hawkins technique. It began, in 1978, when I attended, at the age of 22, a series of Graham-based dance technique class taught by Joan Davis[37] in her dance studio in Harold's Cross, Dublin. I was so inspired, and indeed deeply moved by these classes that I decided to move to New York (1978-1980) to train as a professional dancer.

When I arrived in New York I did not find myself being drawn to the post-modern ideologies of the Judson artists as expressed in their choreographies, improvisational scores and their workshops, opting instead to study more 'traditional' contemporary dance techniques and focusing primarily on the Erick Hawkins technique. This technique strongly informed my (early) 'signature' as a dancer and a choreographer. In later years, as my choreographic practice developed, both my process of creating work and the emergent choreographies would reflect the increased influence that the work/ideologies of Judson artists would have on this 'signature'.

According to Melrose ‘signature’ signals not simply a recognised marking impressed in the work, and it signals not simply intellectual property ownership; what is recognised as a ‘signature’ involves, she argues, a relational mark, established between 'the work', its maker/s, and its validation by those whose judgments of taste and value are vital to the disciplines concerned (Melrose 2007). That ‘relational mark’, I would suggest, is what lies seemingly ‘in the work’, but is recognizable as such by one or another spectator, to the extent that that spectator is familiar with the codes of ‘dance’ (i.e. as a discipline) and with the notion of invention specific to what might be called ‘new dance’. As such it also in-*forms* my own creative choices, and allows me to validate these as ‘possible’, as well as ‘new’, prior to my presenting the work to others.

In my practice the layered, overlapping, fluid and always evolving relationship between the marking impressed ‘in the work’, my ‘self’ as an artist and the judgments of the ‘gatekeepers’[38] of the tradition of contemporary dance is strongly influenced and to a large extent determined, I argue, by the disciplinary practices underlying my process of invention. However, the relationship between the latter and my ‘signature’ choreographies has, in recent works (including ‘Audience (1) Waltzers’, ‘Return Journey’ and ‘HaH’), become increasingly indirect and certainly not always visible on the surface. Therefore I am seeking, through the process of writing, to re-examine and make more transparent the ways in which modes and methods of inquiry appropriated from these disciplinary practices inform my choreographic practice and support the emergence of choreographic works from my processes of (disciplinary) invention. In so doing I am simultaneously seeking to identify if certain aspects of latter can be further developed and/or refined.

At times the writing in this text-based strand of my research may appear to be, and to an extent is, backward looking, since it involves reflection on the already-made; it is nonetheless, simultaneously, supporting me to turn and is turning with me in a process of clarification that is more circular or spherical, revolving and evolving in what feels like an accumulative series of spirals. My expertise, plainly, accumulates from work already-made and that background thickens the ways I engage with

present and future choices. It involves proofs of work already made available to others – hence present choices are relationally-inflected.

Sometimes the writing spirals slowly across the surfaces and the boundaries that define the layered and overlapping disciplinary practices that inform my processes of invention, leaving a thin silvery transparent snail-like trail on all that it touches. And when I look back and around and up and down at these trails I can see/feel, as though anew, now, how the decision to integrate principles and modes of inquiry, appropriated from Hawkins' technique, Authentic Movement, Body-Mind Centering and Mindfulness Meditation, into my practice reflects priorities I had even before I 'knew' them as such. Then as the writing slides on through the fluid membranous matrices that are 'internal' to these practices, gently opening and making their operations more transparent, I reflect on Melrose's (2003) observation that in arts-disciplinary practices, every disciplinary practice and 'every bodywork option includes in it evidence of decisions made in an ethics of practice'; I can see/feel the relationship, between the bodywork options that I have chosen/sought and the ethics of my practice, as being extremely fluid in that, decisions about both continue always to emerge from my commitment to look for and/or invent bodywork options/ techniques, to support me to spiral further into deeply known but yet to be discovered/touched dimensions of this very ethics, which is itself a matter of my judgment of an 'appropriate' relationship with the other.

I imagine the writing spiraling and sliding through the fluid membranous matrices that are internal to my practice and being touched by spirallic patterns first experienced, according to Hartley, at a cellular level in the womb as the cells of the human fetus begin to multiply and arrange themselves into distinct structures. This spirralic pattern is one which, according to Hartley, we consciously or unconsciously enact as we progress through each stage of our development; it manifests in the downward spiral of the striations within bone tissue, in the continuous spiraling movement of muscles as they wrap around the bone and in the heart; the latter she describes as a muscle that spirals in and around itself. Spirallic patterns are also seen/felt in the fluid system in the body not least because each living cell being comprised about 80 percent water is always being irresistibly pulled by the force of

gravity in a downward spiral towards the centre of the earth. In nature the pervasive presence of the spiral form is evidenced in the shell of a snail, currents in rivers, the flow of air, the opening of rose petals (Hartley 1994).

Sometimes I imagine the process of writing supports me to hover like a bird high above the practice. From this perspective, I can see/feel the same spirralic patterns from a different angle: pathways forged by my commitment to attune to and trust the gravitational pull of the 'intuitive logic' – which is that of dance - that leads me across, under and through, a number of disciplinary boundaries whilst simultaneously always returning me to those disciplinary practices that enable me to be aware of, and stay *'present with',* sensations, movements, emotions and thoughts as they arise, and inflect the operations of decision-making, in my process of invention. Just like all of the other patterns in my processes of invention, this pattern of 'return' is not linear, nor does it move in straight lines, forward and backwards in time and space, but revolves - perhaps even spirals - around, and with, my deep curiosity as to whether the practice of being *'present with'* might create the circumstances for sensations/experiences of 'presence' to be evoked in performance. Questions about 'presence' are some of the biggest and most probably unanswerable, because ineffable, questions that I have recently come to recognize as spiraling in and through the heart of my processes of invention, and therefore by default in, and through, the heart of the choreographic works that emerge from it including 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH'.

I would like at, this stage, to make a distinction between my research into experiences of being *'present with'* movements, thoughts and emotions as they arise in the process of inventing a *new* choreographic works and 'writerly' (Melrose 2003) research undertaken in the fields of Dance Studies and Performance Studies, into the concept of 'presence'. Currently much of the latter centers, after Derrida, on the deconstruction of the metaphysics of 'presence' (as logocentrism) and investigates the tensions and complicities between dance and writing on notions of 'the body' and 'presence' in dance, choreography and performance (Lepecki 2004, 2005; Phelan 1997).

Figure 24

Figure 25

"On Earth as it is in Heaven" (1996)
Choreography: Mary Nunan
Top: Diane Bourginone, Virginie Roy, Douglas Comley, Lucy Dundon
Bottom: Virginie Roy, Rionach Ni Neill, Douglas Comley, Diane Bourginone, Darren Crosby.
Photograph: Arthur Gough

"On Earth as it is in Heaven"

Choreography:
Mary Nunan

Dancers:
Diane Bourginon,
Darre Crosby,
Lucy Dundon

Photograph:
Arthur Gough.

Figure 26

"On Earth as it is in Heaven" (1996)

Choreography:
Mary Nunan

Dancer:
Lucy Dundon

Photograph:
Arthur Gough.

Figure 27

The primary focus of my research inquiry (together with the modes and methods of inquiry underlying it) whilst not unrelated is, I would argue, very 'different' to the research into concepts of 'presence' undertaken in the above fields. However, I find that performance-writing produced by professional dance practitioners/researchers, and based on the writer's investigation into their 'expert-arts-disciplinary' (Melrose 2002) experiences of 'presence' in performance, tends, for the most part, to resonate more strongly with the questions about the latter that arise in my choreographic practice (Rubidge, 2004; Claid 2006; Reeves 2009; Sanchez Colberg 2010).

Plainly 'presence' can appear like an overused, and not always clearly defined, notion in 'performance-writing'. In this context it most usually suggests the performative power of choices made by a dancer and/or a choreographer – an ability in the performer to encounter and hold the enquiring gaze of the other, perhaps through a controlled use of heightened energy. Claid, however, argues that 'performing presence' is not fixed in either the body of the performer or the audience/spectator but moves in the gap between them (Claid 2006). I feel a keen interest Claid's research into this 'gap' not least because questions about audiences, and specifically the relationship between audience and performers, strongly informed my process of inventing and performing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH'.

I also feel a keen interest in how Claid, the writer, conducts her investigations into notions of 'presence' in performance. I am particularly struck by how, in her book 'Yes? No! ….Maybe', she integrates what she herself describes as a 'cacophony of voices' - all her own - in accounting for her research in this area (Claid 2006). In so doing she manages, I would argue, to enact, as the writer, the multiplicity of perceptions and possible interpretations that she identifies as being at play in performance whilst simultaneously investigating them. There is no hierarchy apparent in relationship between all her voices which she identifies as her spectator voice, her academic voice, her autobiographical voice, her contemplative voice and also the voice of her experience as a professional director, choreographer, performer and teacher. The writing produced is, I argue, far from cacophonous; each voice is very clearly defined and collectively they provide valuable insights what Claid

identifies as the ‘ambiguous and seductive tension of performing presence’ that enlivens performance-spectator relations (Claid 2006).

Through using many ‘voices’ in her writing Claid manages, I argue, to create an ambiguous and seductive tension that also enlivens the writer-reader relations. I find myself being, in Claid’s terms, ‘seduced’ by her research into performance-spectator relations. I wonder might her account of ‘performing presence’ provide me with some insights into aspects of my own questions in this regard? I tease it out to see if, and how, it might ‘fit’ as a descriptor of the performer-audience relations that I am investigating (playing with) in ‘Audience (1) Waltzers’. Yes, no, yes, no, oh ……… well maybe, but maybe not entirely…

Claid’s insights into notions of ‘presence’ are articulated as a dimension of her ‘signature’ as an artist/researcher rather than it’s sole focus. Similarly, in my research undertaking questions about ‘presence’ in performance are also inextricably linked to other, ‘different’, sensations/questions that I am simultaneously investigating in my choreographic practice. In addition, the critical-meta processes, modes and methods of inquiry underlying our respective research undertakings are also very different, one from the other, as are the sense faculties to which we have each chosen to attune in our investigations; Claid’s investigation into the notion of ‘presence’ focuses on the live action of performing and watching (the visual sense), hence her use of the term ‘spectators’, whilst mine focuses on the live action of performing and feeling/sensation, the somatic experience of movement (as part of which I include the kinaesthetic sense). So whilst I feel a strong affinity with Claid’s overall research I also recognize that the specific points at which respective inquiries align are very fine and very fleeting.

And yet this does not diminish the impact of Claid’s insights on my practice, or the ‘lift’ I get when I feel them resonating with and indeed illuminating aspects of my inquiry. Yes, I feel a desire to lean further into them, let them lift me higher. And yet I also feel, even as I rise up, the depth of our ‘differences’ as expressed in our respective processes of invention. And then I know, that oh no, that I must drop again onto the ground of my own inquiry and push on, alone, trusting that that in so

doing I might, paradoxically, increase the possibility for me to encounter myself and Claid and you and others in the space of 'presence' again, well…. maybe.

In the process of inventing and performing 'Audience (1) Waltzers' I am setting out to explore and experiment with how I might provide for members of the audience to experience the dance and the space within which it unfolds, somatically through sensing the movement rather than through a sense of sight, through primarily seeing – or in academic terms, 'reading' – the movement of the dancer and its relationship with the choreographer's way of seeing, doing and knowing.

The word 'Soma' is a Greek word for the living body. And Somatics is the field that studies the soma as the body experienced from within from first person perception:

> It purports that 'the soma' being internally perceived, is 'categorically different from a body, not because the subject is different, but because the mode of viewpoint is different - a sensory mode that provides unique data (Hanna 1995 p.341).

My use of the word somatic embraces, in this context, the notion of kinaesthetic experiences of movement but is not primarily defined by them. I pause to reflect on the term kinaesthesia which, according to scholar/choreographer Leigh-Foster, was invented at the end of the nineteenth century to examine eighteenth century practices of bodily disciplining and to establish general features of physicality that indicate how people might experience the body and movement (Leigh-Foster 2010). According to Leigh-Foster there is remarkably little use of the term in scholarly discourse – it is sporadically referenced and investigated in medicine and neurobiology and more consistently in kinesiology textbooks and dance pedagogy – and this can be traced, she argues, to the pervasive mistrust of the body and the tendency to classify its information as either sexual, unknowable or indecipherable.

'Kinesthesia' is one of three terms that Leigh-Foster (2010) uses to frame her analysis of how dance summons its viewer's 'empathetic' relationship with it in performances. She begins her recent inquiry in this area by asking

> what do we feel when we watch dance? What do we feel when we watch dancing? Do we 'dance along' inwardly? Do we sense what the dancer's body is feeling (Leigh-Foster, 2010 p.1)?

These questions evoke, I would argue, a research context in which the dance is being considered as a 'thing/event', already there, being watched by an audience: my studio-based process of inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' on the other hand begins with, and revolves around, the question(s) - what is dance and how might I provide for it to be experienced, somatically, by the dancer and the audience in performance?

In 'Audience (1) Waltzers' I am setting out to investigate, in part, the notion of 'dance', this dance, as a sense/sensation of 'presence' that circulates in space of performance and belongs to neither the dancer nor the audience. I am curious as to if and how I might provide for the audience to sense/know/feel this dance as a play between a multiplicity of sensations, memories and imaginings evoked through performance rather than a single fixed set of steps, known only by the performer/dancer. This is the first time that I have set out to explicitly consider questions about audience (together with questions about dance and choreography) as an integral part of my, always inevitably, multi-dimensional process of inquiry. I see this work as marking the beginning of the audience 'turn' in my practice. The following account gives a description, in relatively broad brush-strokes, of 'Audience (1) Waltzers'.

As members of the audience enter the performing space they find a number of chairs in the centre of the room each chair facing a different direction (fig. 50). It is clear that they can choose where to sit. In each performance the number of audience members is always limited, not least because it takes quite a lot of space for this seating arrangement to be accommodated. But numbers are also limited in order to create an intimate performance environment. When the audience is seated the sound artist Michael McLoughlin (appendix iii) enters the space and sits down as his desk. The sound composition for this work comprises pre-recorded tracks that are mixed with sounds sampled during the live performance. The pre-recorded material includes a recording of my voice as I name various parts of the body - skin, bone,

lungs, heart, blood and breath interspersed with other words - space, sensation, surface, wall, wall of death and waltzing. It also comprises text and music sampled from other sources. Both the movement and the sound have very clear compositional structures within which space/time for improvisation is also provided. The piece lasts approximately 25 minutes. Photographic images (figs. 50-57) of the live performance of this work in Limerick City Gallery are included in this submission.

When the audience and the musician are seated I (the performer) allow some time for silence and stillness to descend before entering the space. When I enter I walk slowly around its periphery lightly touching the walls with my fingertips and fingernails. The sounds I make are recorded live by Michael Mc Loughlin and played through the speakers that surround the space. Throughout the piece I repeat this pattern of travelling around the periphery of the space. On my next round I pause at specific places to trace circular pathways on the surfaces of the walls at first using the palms of my hand and then the full surface of my arms. Each time I return to these places I press more and more of the surface my body again the wall and push against it. The sound of these movements are all recorded and mixed into the score. The piece slowly builds. The movement and the sound become more and more layered even though the simplicity of the 'base-line' walking/circling pattern foundational to the choreography remains in tact.

Each time I circle the space I gradually increase the tempo of the walking and of the other gestures that I am performing until eventually I am leaning and pressing into the wall, with my whole body, and spinning repeatedly, on my own axis, whilst circling around the room, all the time keeping in contact with the wall surfaces. I then break into a run. As I run, I push even more strongly against the walls, this time with the palms of my hand. I am trying to make the walls spin! Getting faster and faster I repeatedly circle the space running, pushing, running, pushing. As the speed of the running increases the push becomes lighter and lighter. Eventually, running at full speed, I complete one full circle of the space during which time I barely touch the walls at all. I feel/imagine that the charged walls are moving now, momentarily: lightly, brightly. I then begin to reverse the whole process, first touching the walls with my fingertips, then with the palm of my hand before gradually leaning into, and

pressing, more and more of my body against them. The movement becomes slower and slower. Then just before the movement settles into stillness I set out to reverse the circle again, retracing my pathway and the gestures that I recently imprinted on the walls. Pressing the side of my face against the walls I feel the light echoes of these movements, the light echoes of these sensations as I slowly rewind. I press more and more into the wall so that I can feel their fading warmth. In this way I slowly exit the space. The sound continues for a short time after I leave until it is time for it too to 'exit' into silence.

Throughout the performance each member of the audience can choose to either follow my pathway (by turning in their seat) or to sit facing in one direction. If they chose the latter option, which interestingly most audience members do at some stage in the performance, they can only see/feel the movement when I pass through their line of vision. As the choreographer/performer I know that the audience are clearly aware, because of its repetitious pattern, that the movement is continuously unfolding on the periphery of the space and I am delighted when they chose not to watch it all of the time. In conceiving the piece it was my intention to invent a choreographic structure that would provide for the audience to have the choice to *not* watch every gesture of the choreography so as to provide some time/space for them to engage their other senses, and their somatic imaginations, in experiencing the dance.

In 'Audience (1) Waltzers' I am not setting out to present/perform dance, *this dance*, as something that I know and am going to show, but rather as an experience that the audience and I might both find in performance. (Plainly what I do, for this shared experience to take place, can be described as performative[39]: it targets a positive and quite specific engagement by the other, but cannot guarantee it in individual spectators.) My aim in so doing is, in part, to provide for the essence of this dance to emerge and circulate in the space between us in performance. With this and equally with this degree of uncertainty in mind I set out to create a space that might provide, through the content and structure of the choreography, for the audience to experience a certain degree of 'not knowing' as a way of stimulating their active engagement in the performance. When I am inventing and indeed performing this work I am aware,

after Claid, that in order to evoke the ambiguity of 'not-knowing' for the audience, I cannot be ambiguous; in order for the piece to work I must fully attend to the 'precisely defined action' of the choreography.

> However, the ambiguous 'not knowing' that engages spectators has nothing to do with vagueness of inexactness. Rather, it is the spectator's knowledge of possible identifiable points that make the not knowing possible. And it is the performers attention to precisely defined action that evokes the ambiguity of meaning for the spectator (Claid 2010, p.6).

In each process of invention I, as the choreographer, decide which 'precisely defined actions' and/or precisely defined improvisation scores I, and indeed the other performers, need to attend to in performance. To be decisive in creative practice requires 'unrelenting decisiveness, diligence and strictness' (Artaud 1938, cited in Bogart 2001, p.45). According to theatre director Bogart, to achieve the violence of decisiveness – which requires rejection of other options in order to include this one - one has to 'choose death' in the moment by acting fully and intuitively without pausing for reflection about whether it is the right decision or if it is going to provide the winning solution (Bogart 2001, p.50).

There are many times, throughout the process of inventing choreographic works when the cacophony of thoughts, emotions, expectations, hopes and fears that arise when I am facing the prospect of this 'death' can become almost overwhelming. It is at precisely these moments that I find it very valuable to apply my expertise in those modes and methods of inquiry that support me in remaining '*present with',* to the end of cutting through, the clatter and indeed the clutter, that these 'risings' generate.

My sensibility as an artist, and the techniques that I now use to craft (and perform) my choreographic works is strongly informed by my relationship with these modes and methods of inquiry and by their relationship to each other in my overall practice. These relationships continuously evolve, from a basis specific to my expertise, not least because as each 'new' method becomes integrated into my process of invention it inevitably causes the 'deconstructed' methods to fade away or to become transformed.

According to Melrose (2003) then, ‘disciplinary-mastery’ is always relational, signaling not only choices made but also those disciplinary choices not made, which ‘ghost’ (hence thicken) the physical, allowing spectators to seem to see/feel more than they see. They see/feel dance (i.e. the discipline), as well as this dance.

In that liminal, ghost-filled, space evoked by Melrose, I can sense/feel that my disciplinary-mastery, which is continually evolving through a process of ‘deconstruction’ and ‘bricolage’, is doubly ‘ghosted’: ‘thickened’ by choices not made, and ‘thinned’ by choices made but so fully deconstructed that there is little visible trace of them in each new emergent choreographic work. Here, once again, spectators feel/see what they feel/see, but also feel/see this dance’s other, that they are likely then to unfold around the present work (viewed as hypotyposis, a condensed, economical, ‘vivid sketch’ of the discipline more generally, ready then, writes Melrose, for each spectator to unfold in terms whose particulars are specific to each spectator.)

There is, for example, little obvious trace of Hawkins’ technique in my movement or in my choreography now because I have, through the introduction of other modes and methods of inquiry, specifically those drawn from the Somatic practices of Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement, been able gradually to deconstruct this technique, and selectively extract from it only those principles that I consider necessary for my specific practice. However, I am now returning aided by the process of writing to re-examine, reflect on, and to give recognition to, the important influence Hawkins’ technique had, and continues to have, on my choreographic practice.

Figure 28

"Here then Elsewhere now" (1997)
Choreography: Mary Nunan
Dancer: Diane Bourginon
Photograph: Arthur Gough

The Erick Hawkins Technique

I begin this return with an homage to Hawkins.

Erick Hawkins' first introduction to dance as an art form was in 1930. At that time he was as student at Harvard, studying classical literature and culture.

> Well, once I got to see a performance in New York of two German dancers, Kreutzberg and Georgi. Right away, from the first intermission, I knew it was what I wanted to do… and I had literally never heard that there was such a thing as dancing upon a stage before that (Erick Hawkins, interview by Gail Myer, 1979).

From 1934 to 1938, Erick Hawkins studied at the School of American Ballet, founded by George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein. From 1936-1938 he danced as a member of Kirstein's Ballet Caravan, which made its debut at Bennington College, sharing concert space with Martha Graham and her Company. Very shortly after that he began studying at the Graham School. From 1938-1950 Hawkins and Graham shared an intense personal and artistic relationship; during this period he was also married to Graham for a brief period of time. He was the first male dancer to join the Graham Company making his first appearance, in 1938, as a performer in *American Document* (Celichowska 2000).

On leaving the Graham Company Hawkins went on to establish his own school, in New York, in 1951. He used this school as the base from which to set up his own company and to develop his own dance training technique. In developing his technique Hawkins was interested in challenging what he considered as the important, but little acknowledged, difference between training dancers in *techniques* and training dancers in particular movement *vocabularies* and *styles*. According to his definition, verifiable information about what constitutes efficient movement lies in the realm of movement science and *technique*; the shape and aesthetic choices governing the look of this movement have to do with *vocabulary* and *style*.

It is arguable whether Hawkins succeeded in his aim to teach technique rather than *style* because his technique was in fact very much informed by, and reflective of, his own movement aesthetic. On many levels Hawkins' approach to technique was in fact very similar the other contemporary dance training techniques developed by his contemporaries, Graham, Humphries, Limon and Cunningham not least because in each of these techniques, as in Hawkins', one trains through repeating a series of prescribed exercises designed to support one to master its core principles. However, despite the fact that he did not break entirely with the tradition of teaching *style* and *vocabulary*, Hawkins' commitment to evolving a technique based on ideokinesis[40] (the study of movement imagery to change habitual neuromuscular-skeletal patterns) and kinesiology (the science of movement) distinguished it, I would argue, from the other contemporary dance techniques developed at that time.

Through his study of ideokinesis Hawkins developed an interest in exploring the dialogue between the mind and the body in technique training. He pursued this interest through developing a concept that he termed 'think/feel'. He later incorporated this concept into his technique through using movement imagery to enable dancers to increase their sensitivity to optimal muscular coordination. In so doing Hawkins' aim was to ensure that, the mind, or old patterns of mind would not interfere with the movement by tightening the muscles erroneously. 'Tight muscles', Hawkins observed, 'don't feel. Bound flow is trying to drive the car with the brakes on' (Hawkins 1992, p.124).

In addition to his study of ideokenesis Hawkins' study of kinesiology also greatly informed the development of his dance training technique. According to Hawkins, the kinaesthetic sense, the sensing of movement is the heart of dance (Hawkins 1992):

> When one understands the scientific reasoning behind kinesiology, one arrives at such unity of the body and mind that one simply 'does the movement'. It is a process of direct introspection of how the body feels in muscles and bones and its overall esthesia - its common, undifferentiated feeling, sensation and tension (Hawkins 1992, p.124).

Hawkins' technique is widely recognized as one of the first contemporary dance techniques designed to support dancers to develop more efficiency in movement by releasing superficial muscular tension in the body: 'Through sensuousness', he observed, 'the body becomes a clear place' (Hawkins 1965, cited in Hawkins 1992, p.68).

In his book of essays entitled *The Body is a Clear Place* (1992) Hawkins argues that the tendency to try to achieve strength and clarity in movement through hard work was one of the most glaring theoretical errors in Western Dance training. Such an approach to dance training was, according to Hawkins, based on a spiritual and psychological error, identifiable as a subtle Puritanism:

> The spirit of Western man, as a result of his economic, social and religious ideas, has made him think he had to work, exert effort or force, to conquer nature. Therefore, unconsciously, from the first formal steps of training, dancers in the West have passed on this erroneous notion about human movement – that you must 'make' the movements happen, or dominate the movement through your will or 'hard work' (Hawkins 1965, cited in Hawkins 1992, p.63).

Whilst not entirely convinced that this statement could not be very easily challenged, I have included it here because it provides some insight into the ideology underpinning Hawkins' vision and his desire for an alternative approach to dance technique training. According to Hawkins, whilst this subtle Puritanism or attitude toward effort (which he argues underlies the desire to dominate), can result in movement obviously perceived with the senses, it is not sensuous. The new 'revolution', according to Hawkins, was in sensuousness: 'Sensuousness is effortless and has no sense of the dominating exhilaration of competitive achievement, nor of the morbid excitement of aggressive violence' (Hawkins 1959, cited Hawkins 1992, p. 29).

Hawkins' distinctive technique is widely recognised by many professional dancers as being 'revolutionary' not least because of his prescient espousal of the values of 'ease' and 'effortlessness' which would later become central to development of post-modern 'release-based'[41] techniques. When writing about his choreography Hawkins

expresses his aspiration to go beyond 'naïve realism' to create a 'plotless' dance, resonant with what Harvey Rochlein characterises as the Theatre of Perception[42]. This approach to choreography together with the unique dance technique which he developed distinguished Hawkins as 'a 'maverick'[43] of reverse aesthetic; one of grace, sensuousness, immediacy, poetry and free, effortless flow' (Celichowska 2002, p.2).

However, despite being a maverick and despite his aspiration to inspire a 'revolution' Hawkins' choreography did not, I argue, receive the same degree of wide critical acclaim and public recognition, in the 1950s, as that of some of his other peers, e.g. Graham, Cunningham and Limon. Nevertheless, the impact of Hawkins' 'revolution' on the generation of artists that were to emerge from the Judson Era in New York City in the 1960s cannot be underestimated. In her memoir, Yvonne Rainer, choreographer, dancer, film-maker and one of the most important and indeed influential artists of this period writes about being 'knocked out' by the simplicity and directness of '*Here and Now with Watchers'* performed by the Erick Hawkins Company in a concert presented at the 92nd YMHA around 1957:

> I was knocked out by the simplicity and directness of 'Here and Now with Watchers'. At one point a female dancer leisurely walked, without stylization, from the wings and placed an object downstage centre. I had not yet seen such an ordinary walk in a dance performance and was strangely moved. It was as though that golden future was not only beckoning from a distance but was now about to pull me over its threshold. I went home that night in a state of exaltation (Rainer 2006, p.173).

Sensuous revolutions in the arts must, by definition unfold sensuously, but they should not, I would argue, be misunderstood as less radical than other revolutions. In his 'revolution' Hawkins was not, as far as I can judge, proposing a 'soft' option, but was, by his own avowal, aiming to express in his art 'Dance that is violent clarity' and 'Dance that is effortless' (Hawkins 1962, cited in Hawkins 1992, p. 38).

Like the dance technique that underpinned it, Hawkins' choreography was gentle and subtle in form and content, and may well have fallen victim to what is, according to

Kristeva, the invasion of spectacle in performance, which she argues may cause great works of art to remain invisible. The only way for them and possibly us to preserve the possibility of their appearance is, she argues, by keeping our 'intimacy in revolt' (Kristeva 2002, p.13). She proposes 'revolt' as a 'return/turning back/displacement/change' (Kristeva 2002, p.5) and posits 'intimate revolt as the only possible revolt' (Kristeva 2002, p.12).

When I was first introduced to the Hawkins technique in 1978, I found it strange and compelling, both; strange, because Hawkins' gentle approach to training the body was unfamiliar to me at that time. Prior to studying this technique I had always understood that one developed strength through effort and exertion; compelling, because whilst I did not understand the ideology underlying Hawkins' aesthetic, I found myself being instinctively drawn in, whilst at the same time being not a little fearful of the gentle and intimate sensation of movement for which his principles provided.

Over time and after many years of study and practice my understanding of the kinaesthetic logic of Hawkins' technique gradually deepened. This mature and, in part, retrospective understanding of the technique contrasts with that of my first introduction to it, when I simply surrendered to the experience of learning it, despite feeling hesitant about relinquishing experiences that were 'known' to my body - tight muscles and strong, effortful action – in favour of those that were 'unknown' - soft released muscles and light, less effortful, action. It could not have happened without some sense of, or some willingness to, trust. In so doing I experienced, then as now, how emotions of hope and fear can arise whenever I am about to step into the 'unknown'.[44]

My first Hawkins teacher was a woman called Beverley Brown. A former dancer with Hawkins' Company, Brown founded her own dance company in the 1970s and taught classes from her studio-loft, which was also her home, off West-Broadway in New York City. In addition to studying with Brown I also studied this technique at the Hawkins studio with other independent teachers based in New York City at that time, including Carole Conway, Mary Spalding and Daniel Tai.

In 1979, I had an opportunity to partake in a technique class[45] taught by Erick Hawkins in his school in New York City. I have chosen the intimate device of story telling to give you a brief account of this experience:

> *One day as I was leaving the Hawkins studio in New York City, having just completed an Intermediate Level technique class, I noticed that Erick Hawkins was about to teach a class for his Company members. At that moment, acting on impulse and fully expecting my request to be refused, I went to the reception desk to ask if it might be possible to attend this class. Much to my surprise I was told that I could attend.*
>
> *As the class was primarily for the members of Hawkins' professional company I had expected it to be very advanced and technically challenging. Therefore, as a relative beginner, I decided to take a position at the back of the studio, at the side near the exit, so that I could slip out quietly if it became too overwhelmingly difficult for me. However much to my surprise, again, the class unfolded at a very slow pace. Technique classes in the Hawkins Studio normally last between 1 ½ to 2 hours and usually follow a predetermined structure . Erick Hawkins' class did not follow this structure. He talked a lot, right from the beginning, and after two hours had passed we still had not finished the floor exercises. I never found out how the rest of the class unfolded because after two hours I had to leave to go to work. At that time I, like so many aspiring professional dancers in New York, worked as a waitress in order to cover the costs of living and paying for dance classes. Although, he talked for about two hours I didn't retain much of what Hawkins said, apart from one statement, which I remember, very vividly, even though I did not 'get it' it at the time - 'My 'revolution' has not yet been understood.'*

This statement about his ‘revolution’ not yet being understood, which he delivered very quietly that day, in class, became deeply embedded in my body/mind as a sensation/memory that I can now, many years later, more deeply appreciate. At the time I certainly didn’t entirely understand Hawkins’ ‘revolution’; in fact I left the class feeling somewhat underwhelmed by the fact that he had spent so much time talking and that as a consequence we had spent very little time ‘dancing’. However, this story told in the context of this practice-based research undertaking serves, amongst other things, to illustrate how this not–very-inspiring-at-the-time experience would later, and retrospectively, be revealed as being a very significant and profoundly inspiring moment in my development as an artist; the process of re-telling it, in writing, brings the seed of ‘revolution’ planted by Hawkins to light and causes it to flower again. And as it does it finds itself blossoming alongside the other ‘revolutionary’ seeds planted in the soil of this research: Kristeva’s delicate and intimately ‘revolting’ perennial ‘returns’, and the yet-to-be introduced blooms of Tibetan Dzogchen master Sogyal Rinpoche’s wrathfully gentle ‘revolutionary’ transmission of Tibetan Buddhist principles and practices.

As part of the process of examining if, and how, I might integrate story-telling into this mixed-mode heuristic framework I extended my investigation to examine if, and how, it is used in other fields of research within the knowledge producing tradition of the academy. This revealed that story telling is considered acceptable, within this tradition, when it is contextualized within a specific methodological framework, being perhaps most frequently used, and authorized, in ethnographic research.

The primary role of the narrative and other genres of writing in ethnographic research is to represent a ‘culture’[46], or aspects of a ‘culture’, being studied by using specific and discernible rhetorical and narrative conventions. In this field ‘culture’ is not considered as a scientific object of investigation, but ‘is created, as is the reader’s view of it, by the active construction of a text’ (Van Maanen 1988, p.7). The research process and researcher’s active construction of the text is mediated through experiential, political, institutional conventions including personal accounts, the latter because, within ethnographic research, the validity and indeed the importance of revealing the ‘self’ while revealing culture is central to the endeavour.

Ethnographic research is widely regarded as having pointed up many important issues about the hitherto little acknowledged role and the possible biases of the writer, within academic research (Van Maanen 1988; Spradley 1979; Geertz 1973).

Emerging from the ethnographer's 'expert-disciplinary mastery' (Melrose 2003) the ethnographic 'tale' reflects, and is a reflection of, research undertaken into a specific aspect of 'culture'; a silver narrative thread, flowing in a canal, the course of which is pre-determined and contained by the 'writerly' (Melrose 2003) methodological paradigms that define this field.

The Hawkins narrative, told in the context of this practice-based research undertaking serves, I want to argue, a very different research imperative than that of an ethnographic tale. It is to the end of giving an account of, and reflecting on, my experience of being present in a studio-based context when some philosophical, ideological, epistemological and technical aspects of one of the disciplinary practices underlying my process of invention were being transmitted.

Emerging from my 'expert-disciplinary mastery' (Melrose 2003) as an artist, the story about the Hawkins technique class reflects, and is a reflection of, one of the many sub-strands of this practice-based research undertaking; a silver narrative thread; a current, flowing in the river of the text as it wends its way over, and through, the landscape of my epistemic practice, its course determined by the stony banks and the jagged edges of the interdisciplinary and mixed-mode surfaces that it touches and is touched by along the way.

However, despite the fact that the Hawkins' story is not an ethnographic tale it nevertheless provides, in its telling, some insight in the oral/studio-based modes and methods of transmission that are central to the 'culture' of western contemporary dance performance. In the case of Hawkins, and indeed the other major western contemporary dance techniques invented at that time[47] (all of which were predicated on a series of prescribed exercises), this method of transmission created, I would argue, an ideal environment for the propagation of 'blackboxed' principles.

‘Blackboxing’ is a term that Historian of Science, Biagioli (1995) uses to describe how, in scientific research, knowledge is replicated and how certain parameters get included or excluded in the process. He argues:

> that a disputed experiment becomes undisputed (that is, replicated, canonized, blackboxed) when people begin to accept the experiment itself, the apparatus with which it has been performed, and the bodily skills of the original experimenters as the term of calibration for their own replications (Biagioli 1995, p.71).

According to Biagioli, the process of ‘blackboxing’ can sometimes lead to situations where an experiment is considered ‘right’ because it can be replicated and is replicated because it is ‘right’. Biagioli (1995) argues, citing Kuhn (1977) that knowledge also becomes ‘blackboxed’ because students accept ostensions provided by their teachers, or textbooks (and the tacit knowledge that goes with them), as a result of the authority they attribute to those sources. Biagioli’s account not only resonates with my experience, but leads me to argue that the structure, content and power dynamics of those classes in which I studied codified dance techniques under the guidance of a teacher were such that the knowledge transmitted was inevitably, because of their prescribed content and hierarchical structure, doubly ‘blackboxed’.

My current practice still contains traces of certain ‘blackboxed’ principles, (mastered through the repetition of Hawkins’, and other codified contemporary dance techniques). Many of these principles are helpful in supporting me to maintain physiologically/anatomically safe and efficient habits that protect me from injury; I consider these principles as relatively neutral.

However, many other not-so-neutral principles also became simultaneously embedded in my practice whilst I was in the process of mastering these dance techniques. Therefore the on-going cycle of ‘deconstruction’ and ‘bricolage’, which is now foundational to my process of invention, is essential in that it allows me to extricate from these not-so-neutral ‘blackboxed’ principles only those aspects that I consider essential for my current choreographic and performance needs.

"Aerdha" (1997)

Choreography:
Mary Nunan

Dancer:
Virginie Roy

Photograph:
Arthur Gough

Figure 29

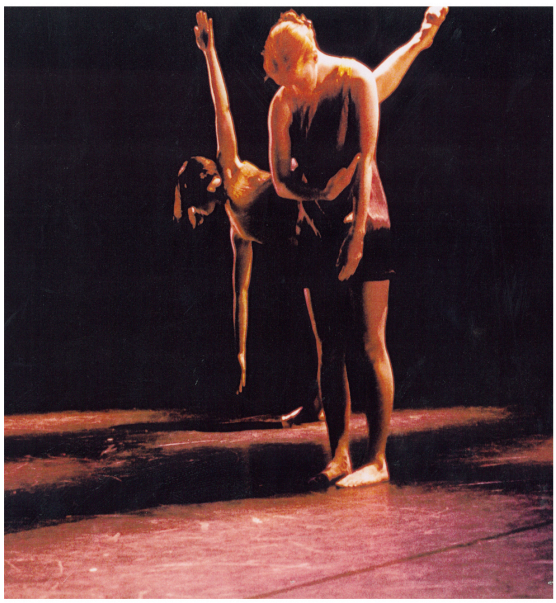

Figure 30

"Aerdha" (1997)
Choreography: Mary Nunan
Dancer: Diane Bourginon, Lucy Dundon
Photograph: Arthur Gough.

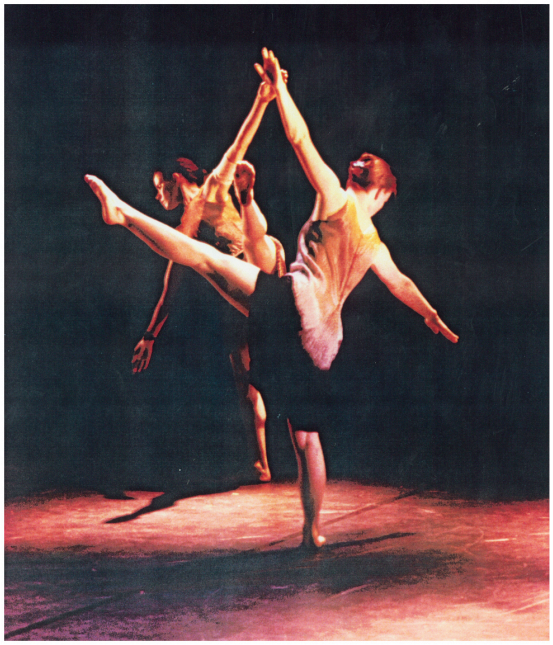

Figure 31

"Aerdha" (1997)
Choreography: Mary Nunan
Dancer: Rionach Ni Neill, Lucy Dundon
Photograph: Arthur Gough.

"Aerdha"

Choreography:
Mary Nunan

Dancers:
Liz Roche,
Virginie Roy

Photograph:
Arthur Gough

Figure 32

"Aerdha" (1997)

Choreography:
Mary Nunan

Dancers:
Diane Bourginon,
Douglas Comley

Photograph:
Arthur Gough

Figure 33

In the early stages of my development as an artist I found this to be a delicate operation not least because it was difficult to find a balance between my seemingly paradoxical desire to master the prescribed movements of the contemporary dance techniques that I was studying and my desire to go beyond them. Despite the fact that each of these techniques was in itself, I would argue, an instance of critical meta-practice (Melrose 2003) which provided me with modes and methods of inquiry to simultaneously interrogate and challenge certain concepts about dance, choreography and performance embedded in them, it was only when I became more skilled in the processes of 'deconstruction' and 'bricolage' that I could fully utilize them in this way. This complex and evolving cycle of 'deconstruction' and 'bricolage' is, I argue, one of the many layered and overlapping processes that characterize my practice as an epistemic practice defined by Practice Theorist, Knorr Cetina as

> creative and constructive practice undertaken by expert practitioners who have to keep learning and who have the knowledge base to continually reinvent their own practices of acquiring and producing knowledge (Knorr Cetina 2001, p.176).

In the 1990s I extended my studio-based practice to include the Somatic practices of Body-Mind Centering, Authentic Movement and Mindfulness Meditation. My aim in studying each of these disciplinary practices was to the end of allowing me to increase my awareness of what I sensed as certain patterns of not-adequately-conscious judgments as to what is, or is not, 'good' dance, choreography and performance, lurking under the surface of my practice and influencing the decisions I was making in the process of invention. I was aware that these judgments had their basis in some yet-to be-fully-examined 'blackboxed' ideologies, paradigms and principles that had become deeply rooted in my practice as a result of my decision, in the first instance, to study and master, through years of diligent practice, certain prescribed dance techniques. I saw the Somatic practices of Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement as providing me with modes and methods of inquiry that I could use to increase my awareness of the impact of those judgments on my process of invention.

> *I feel a desire to strip my choreographic practice down, to return to zero, to start again. What if everything, all the techniques, that I have learnt, especially the judgments about dance and choreography and performance that I have formed along the way, are pointing me in the wrong direction* (Journal extract July 2002).

At that time I found myself stuck in a grid. Ironically it was a grid that I had constructed and one within which I, as an artist, had simultaneously become 'constituted' [48]. Cultural Theorist Massumi's account of how ideological structures tend to pre-code 'the body' according to positions on a grid and in doing so limit its potential for change, gives description to my dilemma at that time. He asks:

> How does a body perform its way out of a definitional framework that is not only responsible for its very 'construction', but seem to prescript every possible signifying and counter signifying move as a selection from a repertoire of possible permutations on a limited set of predetermined terms (Massumi 2002, p.3)?

Massumi (2002) asks this question of culture more generally because of what he argues is the lack of engagement with movement as 'qualitative transformation' (Massumi 2002, p.3) in cultural-theoretical models. It is his argument that in these models sensation is made redundant as movement is subordinated to the beginning and endpoint positions that it connects, providing for theories of displacement but not of transformation. 'As a result', he observes, 'the space of the crossing, the gaps between the positions on the grid, falls into a theoretical no-body's land' (Massumi 2002, p.4).

In the late 1990s I was, in effect, looking for a way to get out of what I now, after Massumi, call the 'grid' that I had myself constructed around my choreographic practice, so that I might, once again, become more aware of the sensation, and not just the form/position of movement at key decision-making moments in the process of invention. I knew that my awareness of the sensation of emerging impulses had become diminished by my tendency to revert, throughout my process of invention, and often at key decision-making moments, to patterns of movement, that I had mastered in my earlier training as dancer and choreographer. It seemed to me that

what Melrose (2003) calls my ‘expert, arts-disciplinary mastery’ of the modes and methods of inquiry that were underlying my practice at that time might have been, paradoxically, obstructing the emergence of ‘fresh’ sensations, patterns, colours and textures in my process of invention. My decision to study and practice the principles underpinning Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement was to the end of using them to monitor if in fact this was the case; to increase my awareness of, and by default diffuse, the inhibitory power of some habitual patterns and conditioned responses that had, over the years, become embedded in, and perhaps even encrusted on, my choreographic practice.

Figure 34

Figure 35

"Chimera" (1998)
Choreography: Mary Nunan
Top: Olwen Grindley, Gemima Hodley
Bottom: Olwen Grindley, Douglas Comley
Photograph: Arthur Gough

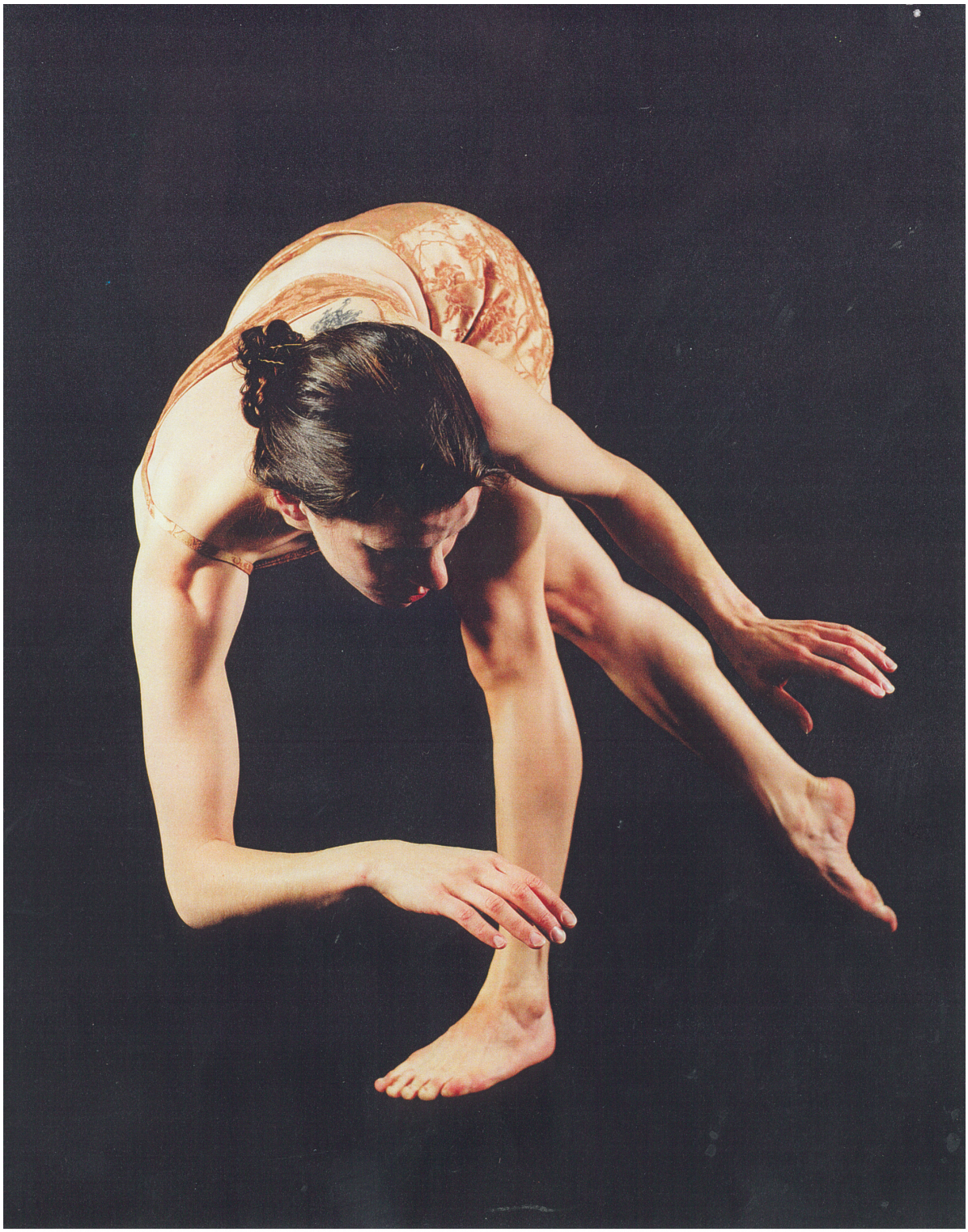

Figure 36

"Chimera" (1998)
Choreography: Mary Nunan
Dancers: Rionach Ni Neill
Photograph: Arthur Gough

"Chimera"

Choreography:
Mary Nunan

Dancers:
Romain Bottenelli,
Rionach Ni Neill

Photograph:
Arthur Gough

Figure 37

"Chimera" (1998)

Choreography:
Mary Nunan

Dancers:
Richard O Brien,
Rionach Ni Neill

Photograph:
Arthur Gough

Figure 38

Nunan the choreographer: the emergence of signature

In 1981, having spent three years studying dance in New York City, I returned to Ireland and was invited by Joan Davis to join Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre. I was engaged as a full-time member - performer, choreographer, teacher, - with this Company from 1981-1986. Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre, Ireland's first State funded professional contemporary dance company, was founded by Davis in 1979 as part of her pioneering vision to develop contemporary dance theatre in Ireland. Prior to the establishment of Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre there had been no professional contemporary dance company in Ireland since the demise of a company directed by Erina Brady, as part of her Irish School of Dance Art, in Dublin in the 1940s (Mulrooney 2006).

In addition to being a repertory company, performing original choreographic works created by guest choreographers[49], Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre also made provision for each company member to choreograph works for the repertoire. It was during my time with this company that I choreographed and performed my first professional work, a short solo, entitled 'Search' (1983). This choreography includes extracts from the novel 'Company' by Samuel Beckett that I speak, live, as I perform. (The full list of works that I choreographed when I was a member of Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre is included in appendix i).

In 1986 I resigned from the Company in order to commit more time to evolving my own choreographic and performance practice. Three years later, in 1989, despite the high quality of the Company's work being given special mention in Peter Brinson's report, 'The Dancer and the Dance' (a report on professional dance practice in Ireland commissioned by the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealoin in 1985) the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaoín[50] withdrew all funding from both Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre and the Irish National Ballet, the only two professional dance companies in Ireland at that time.

Very shortly after leaving Dublin Contemporary Dance Company I was invited, in 1986, to take up a position of dancer-in-residence at Thomond College of Education

(now the University of Limerick)[51]. In 1988, whilst continuing in my role as dancer-in-residence I became founder Artistic Director of Daghdha Dance Company[52].

Established in 1988 the primary focus of Daghdha Dance Company, at that time, was to produce and tour original choreographic works.[53] During my tenure as founder Artistic Director and principal choreographer, 1988- 1999, the company's distinctive artistic identity received much recognition. This was reflected, in part, by the many invitations that the company received to perform at prestigious festivals and venues nationally and internationally (appendix i). After my resignation Yoshiko Chuma[54] was appointed Artistic Director of the company (1999-2002). During this period I continued my association with the company, through being engaged as collaborator/choreographer and performer in three full-length dance-theatre productions[55], directed by Chuma. In 2002 Michael Klien was appointed Artistic Director of the company.

My decision, in 1999, to resign my position as Artistic Director of Daghdha Dance Company was prompted by my growing concerns that I was becoming artistically constrained by the demands and responsibility of running a successful company[56]. Ironically, these concerns surfaced at a time when the works that I was choreographing for the company were receiving much critical acclaim (appendix ii). However, despite this recognition I knew, without being able to put my finger on exactly why, that I was loosing my bearings, artistically, and that the company was, as a result, slowly sinking into a kind of 'middle mush' - a term coined by Claid (2006) to describe situations and circumstances in which artists and/or institutions become 'stuck'. Claid's account of how, at a certain stage in its development, Extemporary[57], a company of which she was once Artistic Director, 'became stuck between the experiment and the establishment' (Claid 2006, p.140) resonates on many levels with how I, and as a consequence Daghdha Dance Company, became thus 'stuck' in the late 1990's.

Basically the Company became more and more 'established' we became increasingly busy producing and touring programmes of choreographic works. As a result of the pressure to produce work (now subtly pervaded by the hope of maintaining the Arts

Council's support) my desire to experiment with some 'new' questions about dance, choreography and performance became somewhat diminished. Eventually, I decided it was necessary for me to resign from the Company so that I could devote more time to doing this.

When I look back now I can see/feel that some of the choreographies that I created during my time as Artistic Director of Daghdha Dance Company had, in their form and content, a 'freshness' or perhaps even a 'rawness', that I did not necessarily appreciate at the time. Instead, I felt exposed by this very rawness and by what I perceived as a lack of clarity, in their gestural detail and choreographic structure: 'Territorial Claims' 1993 (figs. 15-19), 'Fictional' 1994 (figs. 20-23), 'On Earth as it is in Heaven' 1997 (figs. 24-27). And so despite the fact that these choreographies were critically very well received, I was not entirely happy with the way I was working. I had a longing to further develop my process of invention. However, I also felt acutely aware, at that time that I did not know how I might do this, technically.

Bizarrely, I eventually attempted to address what I perceived as certain short-comings in my approach, by drawing on formal 'traditional' contemporary dance techniques to help me craft my next choreographic works: 'Aerdha'1997 (figs. 29-33) and 'Chimera' 1998 (figs. 34-38). Although both these works were also very well received by critics (appendix ii) and audience, I see them as being reflective of a particularly difficult 'middle mush' period in my career as an artist. I was aware, even as it was happening, that my desire to 'experiment' by providing for 'new' movement/choreographic structures to emerge in response to creative/affective impulses had become overshadowed by my decision to draw on 'established' dance techniques/vocabularies in crafting the emerging work. And I knew, even as I was doing it, that I was throwing out the baby, the tender heart of my practice, in favour of the lukewarm bathwater of established techniques: the baby didn't die. In 1999 I broke out of this choreographic 'middle mush' with 'Far Flung'. With this work I managed to loosen the strong 'hold' that the 'establishment' was beginning to have on my work and returned with a sense of gay abandon to the re-embrace the 'experiment'.

Figure 39

Figure 40

"Far Flung" (1999)
Choreography: Mary Nunan
Dancers (both pictures): Lisa Mc Loughlin, Romain Bottenelli, Rebecca Walter, Richard O Brien

Figure 41

Figure 42

"Far Flung" (1999)
Choreography: Mary Nunan
Top: Lisa Mc Loughlin, Romain Bottenelli, Richard O Brien, Rebecca Walter
Bottom: Rebecca Walter, Romain Bottenelli, Richard O Brien, Lisa Mc Loughlin

This was the final work I choreographed for the Daghdha in my capacity as Artistic Director. When I look at the photographs and the video footage[58] of this work I get a sense, retrospectively, of how liberated I must have felt by my decision to resign from the Company. The photographs, in particular, capture a sense of exuberance in the playful movement of the dancers bursting out into space (figs. 39-42). This is particularly obvious when viewed alongside the images of 'Aerdha' 1997 (figs. 29-33) and 'Chimera' 1998 (figs. 34-38). It was as though I felt I had nothing to loose, or prove, anymore, at least at that moment of time.

Of course I was not naïve enough to think that in liberating myself from the 'establishment' of the Company I would become liberated from questions as to, if and how, the ideologies, the 'blackboxed' modes and methods of inquiry and the value judgments, that I absorbed as part of my training in 'established' contemporary and post-modern dance technique, might facilitate and/or obstruct my decision making capacity in the process of inventing choreographic works. Quite the contrary, my resignation reflected my determination to take the time and space necessary to examine this question from a number of different perspectives.

The decision to leave the Company coincided with the beginning of a Somatic 'turn' in my choreographic practice and my return, in 2002, to work with Joan Davis. Davis and I had worked together in Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre from 1981-1986 but our professional paths became separated when I resigned from the Company. With the demise of this Company, in 1989, Davis did not choreograph or perform as a professional artist for a long period of time, devoting herself instead to the study and practice of Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement.

In 2002 she invited a number of professional dancers (of whom I was one) and musicians to join her in a process of experimentation with modes and methods of inquiry appropriated from the above Somatic practices to the end of creating performance events. In order to facilitate this research she set up a collective structure that she named Maya Lila[59]. As part of the early stages of the Maya Lila research process Davis would lead daily workshops to support us collaborating artists to master modes and methods of inquiry appropriated from the practices of

Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement so that we can work, under her direction, to evolve and perform 'scoreless'[60] improvised 'offerings'[61]. My continuing involvement with the Maya Lila (2002-to date) has deeply influenced my development as an artist, on many levels, not least because I now have the option to integrate, as appropriate, many of the modes and methods of inquiry underlying the former in the always evolving process of 'deconstruction' and 'bricolage' (Dempster 1988) that underlies my process of invention.

My aim in mastering these somatic practices was, and still is, to support me to spiral more deeply into some recurring, and simultaneously always-evolving sensations and questions that emerge in each process of invention. I am also interested in using them to stimulate 'fresh' choreographic responses to the inevitable return, albeit often in different guises, of the recurring sensations/questions which, in part, distinguish my 'signature'[62] as an artist. Yes, I am hoping that my 'new' and expanded process of invention might support the emergence of 'good' choreographic works. But this is not the priority. The priority is to nurture the courage to follow/find 'fresh' sensations/impulses and to concomitantly evolve the technical skills necessary to give expression to these sensations in my choreographies. Inherent in this decision is a strong acceptance of the possibility of failure: judgments of failure and/or success to be weighed according to the terms of the 'experiment' and not necessarily according to the terms of the 'establishment' alone.

In recent years the relationship between 'established' contemporary dance techniques and the choreographic 'signature' works that emerge from my process of invention has become increasingly indirect and certainly not always visible on the surface. This is particularly the case in 'Return Journey', the second work invented as part of this research process. When I set out to create this work my original aim was to create, in collaboration with film-maker James Kelly (appendix iii), a choreography-for-camera. The footage for the film was shot on location in Colbert Station in Limerick City. During the editing process I decided that I would prefer that film were not shown on its own, but as one element of a live durational performance installation.

My initial interest in using Colbert station as the location for the film was because of the 'feeling' I get when I travel through it - the sounds, the smells, the platform, the tiles, the ceiling, the trains and the swell of passengers always, inevitably, coming and going, weaving and being woven, flowing, sometimes heaving, and being heaved like two ocean waves sucked in opposite directions. Slap. Standing on the beach I see them become suspended, white foam frozen in one moment of sparkling stillness before slipping through each other subtly, imperceptibly but nonetheless inevitably, changed, parting and starting as though again.

Standing on the empty platform and looking at the train tracks merging in the distance as though to a single, a vanishing point, inhaling and exhaling I feel momentarily stilled by what I experience as the simultaneous contraction and expansion of space, internally and externally.

I carry the above experiences and these 'feelings' of space and perspective, linearity and circularity, coming-ness and going-ness into the process of inventing 'Return Journey'. The are woven into the meta- structure/container for the performance installation.

The word liminality, from the Latin word *līmen*, meaning 'a threshold' (which is defined as a psychological, neurological, or metaphysical subjective state, conscious or unconscious, of being on the 'threshold' of, or between, two different existential planes), gives some sense of the 'space/feeling' atmosphere/ambiance that I was interested in providing for in the 'Return Journey' installation. Van Gennep and later Turner, in their investigations into rituals, use the term liminal to refer to in- between situations and conditions that are characterized by the dislocation of established structures, the reversal of hierarchies and uncertainty regarding the continuity of tradition (Van Gennep 1960; Turner 1969). Many of the elements of 'Return Journey' are intended to provide for a feeling of 'in-betweeness' to be evoked: the films which unfold as a series of images rather than as linear narratives, the repetitive movement of the dancers/performers walking on the periphery of the space, circling continuously and the placement of the seating for the audience in the centre of the space. The latter serves to dislocate some of the more established

structures for audience/performance relationships as does the durational nature of the work as it provides members of the audience with the option to come, and go, as they please throughout the day.

However, whilst the word 'liminal' may serve to describe, in part, the atmosphere that I wanted to create as a point of entry into the work, it doesn't account for the 'feeling/space' that I was interested in accessing/evoking in 'Return Journey'. I look for a word to name to describe this 'feeling/space', which includes emotions but is not defined by them. Many of the words that I consider e.g. open, empty, light do not suffice because they are inexorably bound to an 'opposite' and thus implicitly reduce the 'feeling' to the very polarities that, in my experience, it has the capacity to transcend. The term 'affect' is helpful in pointing to how these apparent binaries might become 'qualitatively transformed' and manifest as one single sensation (Massumi 2002, p.3)[63]. Massumi equates affect with intensity and distinguishes it from emotion. It is his argument that 'emotion and affect - if affect is intensity – follow different logics and pertain to different orders (Massumi 2002, p.27).

The doors for the live performance installation 'Return Journey' open at mid-day each day and they close at 20.00 each evening. Throughout the day the public/audience are free to come, and go, as they like. When audience members enter the installation space they see two dancers/performers, three large screens side-by-side on one wall and three benches in the centre of the space. One of the benches faces the wall on which the three screens are mounted. The other two benches are set at right angles to the former. Members of the audience can choose to sit on any one of these benches. The images, which were filmed on location in Colbert train station, Limerick, are projected onto each of the three screens. Each of the three films is of a different duration and they are each repeatedly looped throughout the whole day. The overall choreography/composition of the film is such that the images constantly fade up and dissolve back to black or white squares. At any point in time throughout the day there are always two dancers/performers walking, on the periphery of the installation space, each one repeatedly putting on and taking off her coat. This live element of the work is performed, in a pre-scheduled rota, by dancers Mary Wycherley, Inmaculada Moya and I. The sound score, composed by Michael

McLoughlin includes sounds sampled in the station. (Biographical details of all the collaborating artists are included in appendix iii). The dancer's coats have black and white hounds-tooth pattern. (See 'Return Journey'- documentation of live performance installation - on the accompanying DVD).

In this work there is little obvious sign of how each dancer's mastery of 'established' contemporary dance techniques informs their performance of the apparently 'pedestrian' action of repeatedly putting on and taking off a coat. And yet it is essential, for me as the choreographer, that each of the dancers (of which I am one) can draw on our mastery of these techniques in performing this task. The aim is not to add any emotion or narrative to the action, but in Hawkins' terms to simply *do* the movement. 'Doing' in this context means attending to the precisely defined actions inherent in the movement - the sequential articulation of individual body parts, the shifts in weight, the rhythm and phrasing, the 'internal' spatial pathways twisting, turning and spiraling and the 'external' spatial relationship/awareness of the other dancers and the audience. As part of our rehearsals I decided which ones we should amplify and/or downplay as part of the performance, and how. In so doing I was seeking to ensure that the kinetic nuances of the actions could be clearly and mindfully expressed but not too stylized: a fine line.

My sense was that if I were to make the movement too highly stylized, it might set it up to be 'read', by the audience, as communicating the 'content' of the work. What I was attempting instead was to dislocate the content of the work and what might be perceived as its communicative intention and thus create a space, a choreographic container, for its expressive 'force' (Deleuze 2004, p.56)[64] to emerge in the relationship between the audience and the performers and to pass, in Massumi's terms, transformatively through the flesh (Massumi 2002, p.xviii) rather than being straight-jacketed by pre-definition.

However, my sense as a choreographer is that this work did not entirely achieve this aim but got somewhat stuck in a kind of blurry liminal space. I have since considered, again and again, and from a number of perspectives, all of the elements that comprise this work - the films, the movement, the sound, the performance space,

the lights - as I ponder what I might have done differently so that creative impulse driving it could have been more fully realized.

In an interview, conducted in 2004, dance artist/researcher Sarah Rubidge discusses her interest in making interactive digital choreographic installations that are read through '….what Gibson calls the haptic senses, in other words touch and sensibility….. '(Rubidge, interviewed by Jem Noble, 2004). One of the devices that she uses, in her installation 'Sensuous Geographies', to stop people using their eyes, is to 'make images that sit on the threshold of perception so that they can't quite make out what they are' (Rubidge, interviewed by Jem Noble, 2004).

I wonder, retrospectively, after Rubidge, whether the images in 'Return Journey' might be too bright, too big, too visible. But then I realize that whilst this indeed may be the case, that the root of the 'problem' is a little deeper than this so I refrain from 'stealing' Rubidge's 'idea'; I have a sense that much of what I perceive as this blurriness of the work was caused by my failure to be 'violently decisive' (Bogart 2001) in editing the film footage for the live installation.

> Stealing is useful so long as you know you're stealing. What you make probably won't look like what you've stolen, but if it does the audience will know. In that case for them what's stolen will become the primary subject, the thing they see first and most strongly, and what you make may be weakened by it (Burrows 2010, p.31).

There are two shots in this film, which for me encapsulate the 'feeling' that I was interested exploring in the film and in the choreography for the live performance. In the first of these shots the image fades up onto the screen, on the left, at 37 secs. and it dissolves 1.08 mins. In the second shot the image also fades up at 37 secs. on the screen on the right. It dissolves at 1.43 mins. In the shot on the left screen we see a figure walking towards us getting increasingly bigger and in the shot on the right screen we see the same figure walking away from us and getting increasingly smaller (see accompanying DVD 'Return Journey'/the film). When I look at these two images unfolding simultaneously I find that I am not so curious about the

narrative/emotion of the person coming towards me or the person going away, instead I find myself reflecting on 'coming-ness' and 'going-ness'; these reflections seem to arise as sensations rather than thoughts. I find them to be intriguing because they touch a space/feeling in me that is not rooted, at least directly, in the ground of narrative emotions.

Many of the other images in the film, the suitcase, the red shoe, the floating cloths, the clock, the trains and the close ups of the face evoke threads of narratives, hopes, dreams and/or fantasies, but I am less moved by these than I am by the two images described above. Basically, the former are too suggestive of 'content' or 'narrative potential' and as a result they diminish the capacity of the overall work to function as a container. If I were to have the opportunity to edit the film again I would 'violently' cut everything out apart from two shots described above. I would then have them constantly looping, fading up from, and dissolving back into, either black or white. In this way the overall work might be better able to function as 'container' rather than as a communicator of choreographed 'content'.

It is my intention to return to and re-work this piece, at some stage, as I believe its core concept is strong, and that it can benefit from feedback. If I do so I would like the work to be presented in a very large space and have at least ten maybe even twenty dancers performing at any one time. In re-working the piece I would also re-examine the movement of the dancers so that the task of repeatedly putting on and taking off their coats hits the intended target (gesturally and spatially) - a mid-point between dance and not-dance, performance and not-performance, choreography and not-choreography. In hitting that point I want to crack open a feeling/space in which its dance can experienced somatically as that which emerges in the relationship between audience and performers: nothing more, nothing less.

The Somatic 'Turn' in my Epistemic Practice

Somatics is the field that studies the soma, the body as perceived from within, by first person perception (Hanlon 1995).

> It purports that 'the soma' being internally perceived, is categorically different from a body, not because the subject is different, but because the mode of viewpoint is different - a sensory mode that provides unique data (Hanna 1995, p.341).

The Somatic practices of both Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement, which I have studied under the guidance of Joan Davis (2002-2010), are both underpinned by theoretical frameworks and modes of inquiry that support practitioners in developing a heightened awareness, from a somatic perspective, of the inter-relationship between one's body and one's mind in movement.

Neither of the above practices was originally designed for application within professional choreographic or performance contexts. The principles underpinning Body-Mind Centering were first developed and applied within remedial/medical contexts. The principles underpinning Authentic Movement found their first applications within therapeutic contexts. Body-Mind Centering continues to be used as a remedial practice in medical contexts but has also, over time, become integrated into mainstream post-modern dance technique training (Bales 2008; Eddy 2009). The integration, into professional contemporary and post-modern dance practice, of the principles underpinning Authentic Movement is, to date, I would argue, relatively less mainstreamed perhaps because as a practice its primary aim is to raise awareness of thoughts and emotions rather than 'the body', per se, and this is not something that is currently prioritized in mainstream dance training.

Body-Mind Centering

The School of Body-Mind Centering (BMC) was founded in 1973 by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen as a means to formalize her research into the relationship between

'the body' and the mind in movement. Its aim is to provide, through 'somatization', experiential learning and hands-on re-patterning, for this relationship to be nurtured as the foundation for integrated transformative experiences of both, as one. As a practice it provides for both the cognitive and experiential learning of the body systems which Bainbridge-Cohen (1993) identifies as follows: the skeletal system, the ligamentous system, the muscular system, the organ system, the endocrine system, the nervous system, the fluid system, the fascial system, fat and skin. Within BMC these systems are not studied in isolation but as dimensions of other body/mind systems/patterns which Bainbridge-Cohen identifies as: the development patterns, the senses and the dynamics of perception, breathing and vocalization and the art of touch and re-patterning. In addition, to using the maps of Western Medicine and Science, Body-Mind Centering is also influenced by Eastern philosophies in its overall aim to provide for practitioners to become aware of the relationship between their body/mind and to act out of this awareness.

Bainbridge-Cohen started her early career as an occupational therapist and as a dancer with Erick Hawkins. I am surprised, and simultaneously not surprised at all, when I retrospectively discover the influence that Hawkins had on Bainbridge-Cohen's work, not least because I was unaware of this connection when I was first introduced to the practice of Body-Mind Centering. This retrospective discovery reveals in part, I would argue, the operations of an intuitive 'logic' always simmering underneath the many layers of my practice, guiding the decisions I make, very few of which are entirely planned-in-advance. And the process of writing is helpful in providing for this 'intuitive logic' to be to be recognized, and saluted.

Modes and methods of inquiry appropriated from the Body-Mind Centering inform my studio-based processes of invention by providing me with skills to become more somatically aware of sensations that arise in my body with organs[65] moving and being moved in, and through, space and time in my studio-based processes of invention. The text-based strand of this research undertaking is also moving and being moved, over time, in a similar way: as I think, and reflect, in writing I can sometimes feel the words sliding over and through the layered and overlapping surfaces of my practice, moistening all that they touch; like the cells of connective tissue these words are elongated fibers that interweave, in the times of writing and

reading, to create a mesh-like connecting network throughout the body of the text and the body of my practice; now delicately blue and shiny like the periosteum, the 'skin', of the bone; now a sheath that wraps each cell, each bundle of cells, until the whole muscle is wrapped; now breathing with the diaphragms[66] and with each and every tender fluid filled organ. Sometimes I feel these words branching into the body/organs of the text echoing the process described, below:

> Each organ is supported within itself by a 'skeleton' of fine connective tissue that branches throughout its structure and by the full internal respiration of the cells, which make an organ as a whole alive to its own presence (Hartley 1995, p.184).

The practice of Body-Mind Centering when integrated with the practice of Authentic Movement, specifically the practice of 'witnessing' (recalling the *theor*, above), supports me in somatically experiencing sensations of movement and also in staying *present with,* and increasing my awareness of, habitual patterns of judgments that may obstruct these sensations. Through studying these practices I have, I would argue, expanded my capacity to be responsive to 'fresh' impulses/sensations, as they pass in and through my organ, gland and skeletal systems, over time, to the end of providing for the former to find expression in the content and structure of emergent choreographic works.

Figure 43

Kettle, Feathers and Stick (2006)
Dancer: Joan Davis, Mary Nunan
Photographer: Kevin Logan

Figure 44

Bucket and Oil Can Dancing (2006)
Dancers : Mary Nunan, Joan Davis
Photograph: Kevin Logan

Authentic Movement

Originally called Movement-in-Depth by its founder, Mary Starks Whitehouse[67], Authentic Movement grew from its roots in dance, Jungian studies and Whitehouse's pioneering work in dance/movement therapy. According to Whitehouse, the term 'authentic movement', which she coined, reflects a particular movement in which the person is 'being moved' as opposed to creating movement (Whitehouse 1979). The concept of Authentic Movement was further developed by one of Whitehouse's students Janet Adler who codified it as a technique. Adler describes Authentic Movement as a Western awareness practice, which involves learning to move from felt internal impulses rather than from imposed forms, and paying attention to feelings that emerge when one moves that way (Adler 2002).

The concept of 'witnessing' is seen as Adler's significant contribution to the practice of Authentic Movement. It emerged out of her experiences of studying with Whitehouse. Whilst the latter has always referred to her own role as being that of teacher, or the observer, of her students as they moved, Adler instead named this role as 'witnessing' and furthermore invited her students to develop the skills necessary to witness each other (Collison 2005). The aim of the skilful 'witness' is to bring a receptive quality of clear attention to the mover, whether that mover is oneself or another mover. A skilful 'witness' can track movements by being mindful of her own inner world of sensation and meaning, judgment and criticism. Through the practice of Authentic Movement both the mover and the witness aim to achieve a level of perception of 'self' and other that is respectful and empathetic (Davis 2006). The development of the inner 'witness' is, according to Adler, one way of understanding the development of consciousness.

Adler describes the architecture of the discipline of Authentic Movement as being based on the relationship between mover and witness, the ground form. This relationship evolves through the study of what she identifies as three interdependent realms of experience: the Individual body, the Collective body and the Conscious body (Adler 2002; Davis 2006). The first realm, the study of the Individual body, is grounded in the longing to be seen in the presence of a witness. In this practice the

person moves, with eyes closed, and learns to track her movement and her concomitant inner experience. The second realm concerns the longing to participate in a whole, to discover one's relationship to the many without losing a conscious awareness of oneself. And in the third realm, one begins to work within the conscious body, towards the experience of presence. The practice of presence develops, according to Adler, into moments in which the body, as a vessel, is experienced as empty. And out of this emptiness another longing emerges: the longing to offer. 'The body moving becomes transparent, becomes dance, and dance becomes an offering' (Adler 2002, p.xviii).

Davis' Maya Lila's collective is founded, in part, upon Adler's framework of the three bodies - Individual, Collective and Conscious - and the development of 'witness' consciousness is central to it.[68] Therefore it is important for Davis that those of us dancers and musicians, who are in the Maya Lila collective, should master the practice of 'witnessing' so that we too can explore, with her, how the primarily therapeutic form of Authentic Movement might be integrated into a professional dance performance practice. In the context of Maya Lila, the practice of 'witnessing' is used to help us to attune to our individual 'world' of sensation whilst simultaneously expanding our field of consciousness to attune to the other dancers, the ensemble/collective, and to the audience in preparation for our 'scoreless' improvised performance 'offerings'.

As part of her/our research into its possible application in performance, Davis experimented with adapting the original Authentic Movement therapeutic form (in which the movers close their eyes and sense inwardly), by inviting us to 'witness' our inner experience whilst keeping our eyes open. According to Davis 'the opening of the eyes is the piece that brought the movement more into the performance form' (Davis 2007, p.38). Many aspects of Davis' practice as an artist seem to strongly resonate with those of Anna Halprin; they have both developed and refined a 'holistic' approach to dance training that goes beyond physical training alone. However, for teaching purposes they both begin with a detailed exploration of the physical as a way of processing feelings, sensations, images and emotions (Davis 2007 ;Worth & Poyner 2004).

Part of the practice of Authentic Movement is for both mover and 'witness' each to commit to the demanding practice of clear articulation of her or his own experience. In Adler's form the mover and the 'witness' speak their respective experiences after each round of movement: the latter lasts for an agreed period of time which is marked by the ringing of a bell. According to Adler 'language bridges experience from body to consciousness' (Adler 2002, p.xvii). In addition to the practice of speaking, Davis also includes the practice of writing as an integral part of the methods that she has developed to support practitioners in increasing their capacity to be mindful of, to 'witness', their inner world of sensation. Therefore, in the early years of the Maya Lila research process she always allocated time immediately after the morning 'warm-up' and after each round of Authentic Movement practised throughout each day, for us to write our experience of the session. The experience is written in the present tense as a method intended to enable each person to *write the experience*, rather than to write *about* the experience.

The practice of writing in Maya Lila emerges out of tasks based on Authentic Movement and Body-Mind Centering principles and practices. The thoughts and emotions that arise when one somatically traces and 'witnesses' the sensation of movement through using these disciplinary practices, sometimes have a narrative content, sometimes not; sometimes manifest as momentary images in a story, sometimes not; sometimes words and phrases form a story, sometimes not; sometimes sensations become memories, sometimes fantasy, sometimes neither; sometimes they erupt as laughter, sometimes as tears; the words sometimes follow the sensation, sometimes lead it.

The first journal extract below, written directly after the morning 'warm-up' session directed by Davis, in August 2003, gives an example of one passage of writing that emerged from this process. The 'warm-up', which usually lasts about an hour, always begins with all the participants lying on the ground. It is guided by Davis who sits on a chair at the side of the room. As part of the process she systematically guides our attention to each of the Body-Mind Centering body systems and invites us

to simultaneously 'witness' the emotions, stories, memories that arise when we attend to our sensations in this way.

Fluid System

> *I am lying on my belly and I am really aware of the wetness in my mouth, the sensation of saliva - I am suddenly aware of the WETNESS of the whole body, the MOISTNESS of being - It feels like a revelation. Joan invites us to add a story and/or an emotion, or to observe story or emotion - I don't really feel any very strong emotion - I feel content - there is little memory or story. She asks us to open our eyes. I don't really want to - as I am enjoying the sensation of this moist place -it feels womb-like. I feel that if I open my eyes I'll dry up. At the end I am sitting, the fluid in the cells of my lungs -shaking me gently* (Journal extract Maya Lila August 2003).

In this next passage of text I write the experience of tracking my movement and of 'witnessing' sensations and emotions that arise during a period of improvisation directed by Davis; in this session Joan suggests we begin with a movement, any movement:

> *I start with some sequential isolations. Joan invites us to feel and support this movement from the tissue. I start vigorously shaking my hands from the wrists - the movement is light and fast - I notice the left hand is less connected. I shake my whole body in order to awaken a sensation in my left hand - it's fun to try to inhabit the habitual movement from the tissue - it makes it more satisfying. I feel connected internally.*
> *I am on the ground - Joan invites us to layer a sense - I pick the eyes - my hand is crawling on the carpet - my focus on the carpet - eyes resting - I sense the other movers - with the eye sensing I feel my self becoming quiet and I feel quietness all round .We are*

invited to add one more sense, I pick the ears -. My body moves around this sense, the final sense I add is touch, the sensation of the body on the carpet.
Joan invites us to let the body/tissue completely feel the movement. I roll on the ground, my body lengthened, the movement sequential - it feels very baby-like - it is happening in the tissue I am not doing it. Joan invites us to let this connection move us, pass through us fully.
Then we are invited to listen to the emotion we are feeling -this is most difficult - I cannot name it but the body is closed, protected, I feel an energy in the heart area, but it's kind of empty/void - the body starts to rock gently - I think of my mother, a rocking movement is starting in the base of my spine, the body unfolds passing the sensations through -noticing there is little life in the feet now - I stand - and start to walk. Next I remember a deep shaking as I stand -bouncing and moving the energy through - this leads me into light jumps. I am surprised at this. I step in a circle, left leg crossing, this turns to a walking circle/sadness
(Journal extract Maya Lila August 2003).

In addition to 'witnessing' our own movement, in another exercise, we practise becoming an external 'witness' to another person's movement. For this practice one person moves and the other person witnesses her/him for an agreed period of time, usually not shorter than five, and not longer than fifteen, minutes. The external witness sits at the side of the space. The role of the external witness is to stay conscious of the sensations, emotions and thoughts that she herself experiences during the session rather than projecting them onto the mover. At the end of the period both the mover and the witness write their own experience of the movement. They write in the present tense, to help them once again to write the experience, rather than to write *about* the experience. The following text is an account of my experience of witnessing another mover.

The mover walks into the space and stands for a long time -I feel stilled watching, time to connect with this body I do not know - long strong arms, veins in the hands - the feet. Stillness. After long time, perfectly long, her head starts to move downwards, hanging upside down her face reddens arms strong release back and up in the space the movement simple and direct no spatial elaborations - hanging upside down the legs crease the back lengthens and the weight shifts right and back again to centre with no apparent effort - I feel rooted, at ease every movement in its own time - rocking; insect-like the hands are rubbed vigorously, now bird, now strange creature, the head simply looks side, side and finally the hands touch the ground and she follows - again the feeling of uncontrived natural unfolding arises - a few more transitions from elbow to ground and she lies there, the spine rises and falls I feel her breath, my breath as fragile as a bird and I feel her spine my spine solid as a mountain range made of millions of fossils. She lies a long time in the wet grass, breath rising and turns her head, cheek pressed with grass and the shock of that one eye without a face ,reptilian - another mover approaches. Standing childlike, human for the first time again, in the same space stamping and skipping the body not seeming to show a preference for its choices starting to spin. Crawling - every movement - full bodied, the extraordinary and deeply ordinary sense of pulling. And finally with the hand to eye gesture stillness descends. All images fade, open, simply one breath (Maya Lila Journal extract August 2003).

When both the mover and the witness have completed their writing tasks, they come together to share their respective experiences by speaking in the present tense.

In the context of Maya Lila and particularly in the preliminary phase of our investigations, the practice of writing functioned, in the first instance, as a method to support us in both 'witnessing' and in tracking the movements that emerged when

we attended to specific sensations. It also functioned, in part, as a mirror which helped us to feel/see, to become aware of, the sensory, emotional, kinetic, narrative impulses, imaginative leaps and associative patterns being expressed in the choices that each was individually making as movers and witnesses. Inspired by Adler's (2002) observation that sensation can precede emotion we set out to attune to this experience. Then we used writing to express the images and textures evoked by the sensation of a single movement, or a short passage of movement. In this way we created a space between moving and writing where we could play. In this space sensations danced back and forth becoming variously words, images, and movements, touching, being touched and transformed, unpredictably and imaginatively in the process.

The primary function of the practice of the writing undertaken in the context of Maya Lila is to support us in developing an increased awareness of the thoughts, emotions and memories that arise when we are attending to the sensation of movement. Writing provides us with a means to process the memories, stories and emotions that we experience as 'witnesses'. In each session the emergent writing has the capacity to function as a mirror that we can use to variously reflect on our experiences and/or to elaborate and imaginatively expand on them.

According to Ulmer, narrative, memory and personal history have an important role to play in the process of invention (Ulmer 1989,1994). He argues that an idea begins as the merest glimmer, a flash of awareness and that one must make emotional associations in order to grasp the image, to bring it into awareness so that it may be worked on; he has developed 'mystory'[69], a heuristic model of teaching theory in experimental Humanities, to encourage students to make these associations. According to Ulmer his heuristic framework allows students not only to reproduce historical inventions and to learn about the vanguard or other rhetoric/poetics from the inside, through the experience of making works in those styles, but also to invent a new poetics (Ulmer 1989, 1994)[70]. He argues that personal anecdote has an important contribution to make to decision-making/ problem solving in a field of specialized knowledge not least because when anecdote is integrated as a generative strand of the process of invention it can reveal eccentric ideas that are working

according to a different logic – an 'il-logic' - below the level of consciousness, and shaping conscious thinking. According to Ulmer, to approach knowledge from the side of not knowing what, from the side of one who is learning (and not from that of one who already knows), is 'mystory' - my story, as a narrative invention in the first person.

There are many resonances, I would argue, between Davis' methods of integrating writing as a generative strand of the Maya Lila research process and Ulmer's experimentation into new modes of academic writing, beyond those positioned on the side of the already-known, not least because each model is designed to support experimentation into the potential power of personal anecdote, experience and emotion in the processes of invention (Davis 2006; Ulmer 1989, 1994).

These two models of enquiry resonate with, and contribute to, my research into the question of whether, and how, I might integrate writing within the heuristic framework that I am inventing to allow me to make specific aspects of my primarily studio-based process of inventing practice-theoretical choreographic works more transparent. The text-based strand of this inquiry is after all revolving, and it is equally being revolved, around the question as to whether writing, when it is integrated with other modes and methods of inquiry, might also play its role in allowing me to spiral towards a space which Cixous suggests is deep in the body - a space further down and beyond conventional thought:

> Thought comes in front of it and it closes like a door. This does not mean that it does not think, but it thinks differently from our thinking and speech. Somewhere in the depths of my heart, which is deeper than I think. Somewhere in my stomach, my womb, and if you have not got a womb- then it is somewhere 'else', you must climb down in order to go in the direction of that place (Cixous 1994, p. 204).

We must, according to Cixous, climb down into that space so that the unconscious mental, emotional, and biographical clichés, the doors, obstacles, walls and distances forged to make a life can weaken (Cixous 1994):

> We will try to go there for a time, since this is where the treasure of writing lies, where it is formed, where it has stayed since the beginning of creation: down below (Cixous 1994, p203).

I sometimes experience the process of climbing 'down' into and beyond emotional and biographical clichés, even whilst supported by the practices of Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement, as being deeply confusing and disorientating, and yet I also simultaneously sense it as an endlessly 'revolting/returning' (Kristeva 2003; Hawkins 1992) journey, a descent into awareness, a deeper and more intimate sense of knowing, a descent into lightness.

> *This is my journey, my commitment to the encounter, and I have found, at times, and much to my surprise that the deeper I go the lighter it gets*
> (Journal extract 2007).


Figure 45

“Maya Lila 2006” | Dancer: Mary Nunan | Photographer: Kevin Logan

Transformed

The old bones

Become her

Throne



Figure 46

“Maya Lila 2006” | Dancer: Mary Nunan | Photographer: Kevin Logan

She reigns , Queen supreme.

(Maya Lila journal 2006)

Figure 47

"Maya Lila 2006" | Dancer: Mary Nunan | Photographer: Leslie Davis

Silent except for the movement of feathers

Of feathers,

Feathers,

Hers

(Maya Lila journal 2006)

Rose Woman

Alone,

Bone

China cups

Gather dust,

Lust

Forgotten

Sun light

Brings mid-day.

Knock,

Her door is open.

(Maya Lila journal 2006)

Figure 48

"Branch" (2006) | Dancer: Mary Nunan | Photographer: Kevin Logan

A pale vast dawn

Treads on wet spider's webs

Brief and momentary

In the washing of time

(Maya Lila journal extract 2006)

Figure 49

"Maya Lila 2006" | Dancer: Mary Nunan | Photographer: Kevin Logan

Mindfulness Meditation

> Buddhist training in quiescence consists of theories and practices concerning the nature of attention, introspection and consciousness; and none of these phenomena are intrinsically mystical. Such practice may be deemed 'pre-mystical', and yet form a crucial element of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist meditation (Wallace 1998, p.21).

The fourth and final disciplinary practice that I am setting out to examine and reflect on as part of this text-based strand is the practice of Mindfulness Meditation. This practice strongly impacts, both directly and indirectly, on a number of levels of my choreographic practice. However, in this strand of writing I am setting out to focus specifically on how it informs the operations of decision-making in my studio-based process of inventing original choreographic work. And in a parallel and inter-related strand I am simultaneously examining and reflecting on that already-familiar question: whether and how the practice of writing can support this inquiry.

The primary aim of Mindfulness Meditation practice is, at its simplest and most profound level, to enable one to experience what mind and body are doing as they are doing it, *to be present with* one's mind and body and energy in their ordinary states of occurrence (Rosch 1997). This aim resonates, at least on the surface, with the expressed aim of Erick Hawkins to develop a technique to train dancers to be conscious of the sensation of movement, *to be present to* the movement that they are doing, to simply *do* the movement. It is by doing this that dancers can, according to Hawkins, most viscerally and effectively express the dance (Hawkins 1992; Celichowska 2000). And the practice of Mindfulness Meditation also resonates, at least on the surface, with the aim of Authentic Movement which is to enable one to *be present to,* to 'witness' the meanings, judgments and criticisms that one attaches to sensations experienced in the moving body.

I begin the process of examining and reflecting on how principles appropriated from the Buddhist practice of Mindfulness Meditation inform the operations of decision-making in my processes of invention by acknowledging, paying homage to, those lineage holders/teachers with whom I have studied. The pattern of paying homage to

teachers recurs in this text-based strand of the research, revealing the important role that oral/live transmission, rather than published wisdom, plays in each of the disciplinary practices that underlie my studio-based processes of invention. Live/oral transmission is not only important: it is in fact, I would argue, an essential element of these disciplinary practices, as is the practice-based study of their principles. It is only through studying, and practising, in this way, that one can achieve a mastery of their respective modes and methods of inquiry – hence the notion of discipleship alongside the notion of discipline and disciplinary practices that continue to constitute 'dance'.

I was first introduced to the practice of meditation[71], in 1981, by a Japanese Zen master from the Soto tradition, Hogen Yamahatha[72], when he came to Dublin for an event organised by the Irish Aikido Federation[73]. And I continued to study under his direction, from 1981-1988, during which time he led shessins[74] in Ireland on an annual basis. In 1986, I also began to study Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and meditation practices primarily under the guidance of Tibetan Dzogchen[75] master, Sogyal Rinpoche and have since that time continued to study under his direction and under that of other Dzogchen masters, primarily from the Nyingpa[76] school of Tibetan Buddhism. For this specific research undertaking I have, in addition, expanded my research to include the study of the Buddhist sutta, *Maha Satipatthana Sutta* (trans. *The Setting up of Mindfulness*) as these texts provide guidance and commentary on the root teachings on mindfulness and on its application in the practice of meditation (Nyanaponika Thera 1962; Venerable U Silananda 2002; Thich Nhat Hanh 1990).

The practice of meditation, which is central to all of the paths of Tibetan Buddhism, is generally divided, within this tradition, into Shamatha (mindfulness) and Vipashyana (insight) (Ray 2001, p.74). Foundational to the study and practice of Shamatha and Vipashyana meditation is the distinction made between the 'knowing mind' (awareness) and the 'thinking mind' (mental events). This distinction between, 'knowing mind' and 'thinking mind' is crucial to understanding the highly technical and often definitively different psychological, contextual and connotative meanings,

between the use of the term ‘mind’ in Buddhist philosophy and psychology and its use in Western philosophy, psychology and science.

‘Mind’ in Buddhism, as distinct perhaps from the ways I and others have used the same term, above, is considered as one of the three aspects, or levels, of the ‘relative’ condition of human existence, the other two being, ‘body’ and ‘speech’. The ‘body’ in addition to the actual physical body, is understood to mean the whole material dimension related to sense perception (eye/sight, ear/hearing, nose/smell, tongue/taste, body/ touch). The ‘speech’ represents energy, which gives life to the material sphere. In human beings this energy consists principally of the vital prana (‘wind/breath’ or energy) force; since it is through the breath that vocal sounds are produced, the term ‘speech’ is used (Ray 2001, p.112). Within Buddhism, ‘mind’ is regarded as the most secret, invisible aspect of human existence. Thoughts are considered as one aspect of ‘mind’. All people think; however, according to Buddhist philosophy, thinking is just one aspect of the ‘mind’. The purpose of meditation is, in a deliberate and methodical way, to become mindful of the activity of the thinking mind (Nyanaponika Thera 1962; Thich Nhat Hanh 1990; Chogyam Trungpa 1991; Sogyal Rinpoche 1992; Namkai Norbu 1996;Venerable U Silananda 2002).

Essentially, the practice of Mindfulness Meditation requires one to take a specific ‘object’ of meditation and rest one’s attention on it. The meditation object most commonly used in Tibetan Buddhism, as in most Buddhist traditions, is the breath. In this basic practice one rests one’s attention on one’s breath and when the mind, as it inevitably does, drifts away into thoughts and fantasies, one simply brings it back to the breath. One can also use the five sense consciousnesses (sight, taste, smell, hearing and touch) and thoughts themselves as the ‘object’ of meditation. The practice of meditation allows one to become acquainted with the *thinking mind’s* tendency toward distraction and also to become aware of the various ways in which it gets pulled away, whether by sense perceptions, thoughts, feelings, or other emotions, from *being present with* the simple task of attending to the object of meditation (Chogyam Trungpa 1991; Varela et al. 1993; Wallace 1998, 2003; Ray 2001; Sogyal Rinpoche 1992; Namkai Norbu 1996).

The study and practice of Mindfulness Meditation, which I have engaged in for a period of over twenty years, has led to my increased awareness of how my *thinking mind's* tendency towards distraction - its tendency to be pulled away from *being present with* simple and indeed complex tasks, by sense perceptions, thoughts, feelings and emotions - can impact on the decisions I make in the processes of invention:

> The mind has many layers and to reach the layer that is most operative, a struggle must take place between the submerged impulses in the hidden zone and the confident voices from a more superficial level that claim to know best. It is above all the terror demonstrating indecision in front of judging faces and the need for reassurance that push one towards pretending to know what one wants (Peter Brook 1998, p92).

The way in which the mind's habitual and apparently confident patterns can, as described by theatre director Peter Brook[77], negatively impact on one's decision-making capacity in the process of creating new work resonates well with my experience. And I have also noticed that the struggle between the strong and submerged voices becomes even more intensified when the conflicting emotions of hope and fear start tugging away and attaching themselves, with no apparent predictability, to both voices at key decision-making moments in my process of invention. The practice of Mindfulness Meditation has not only been helpful in supporting me to develop an increased awareness of the layered complexity of these experiences, it has also prompted me to examine further, through my on-going study of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy the question of why, and indeed how, this happens.

This investigation led inexorably, to questions as to the nature of 'self' – of my 'self', in particular, and its relationship with sense perceptions, thoughts, feelings and emotions; how can sense perceptions, thoughts, feelings and emotions be *distractions*; are they not simply who I am, my 'self'? And is there not, surely, a single, definable, 'self' at the centre of my body, thoughts and emotions and my choreographic practice?

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness

Within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition there are a number of categories of teachings, *yanas*[78], to support one in developing an increased awareness of how one perceives one's 'self' and in examining and reflecting on the tension between an ongoing sense, perception, of 'self' in ordinary, everyday experience and the failure to find that 'self' in reflection. This question has significant implications for creative practices as research, where *critical reflection* is widely held to be important. The first *yana*, associated with the first turning of the wheel of the dharma, is the source of the Abidharma[79] category of teachings, which are also considered as the basis of Buddhist psychology (Ray 2001). It comprises a method of analytic investigation of human experience, which is taught and used in contemplation by most Buddhist schools, to enable examination of the process by which the sense of 'self' arises.

In the Abidharma category of teachings the impermanent nature of human experience is examined in detail. These teachings provide pointers to enable investigation of the succession of individual moments of experience, habitually taken as an unbroken continuum, which we label as 'I' or 'self'. They propose a method by which one can examine the apparent continuity of 'self' by focusing attention on the content of experiential moments (the *dharmas*), the pattern according to which they interact (*karma*) and the process by which a belief in a substantial 'I' is generated (the five *skandhas*).

The word *skandha* is a Sanskrit term which is translated as 'aggregate' and which literally means 'heap'. The five aggregates are: Forms (the body and the physical environment), Feelings/sensations (including both physical and mental sensations); Perceptions (discernments/impulses); Dispositional formations (habitual patterns of thinking, feeling perceiving and acting) and Consciousnesses (Ray 2001, p.330).

Within some schools of Buddhism the five *skandhas* provide the focus for one to examine, through analysis, one's habitual view of the 'self' as being permanent, unitary and independent. As part of this investigation one is directed to look for the

'self' within the aggregates/*skandhas.* Once one begins to discover that the 'self' cannot be found within the aggregates, and that the latter are impermanent, multiple and dependent on cause and condition, one is directed to examine one's own lived experience in order to find out how the sense of 'self' arises. One of the preliminary methods used to undertake this examination is the practice of Mindfulness Meditation.

The most detailed Buddhist teaching on mindfulness is found in the *Satipatthana Sutta* [Pali]. *Sati* means mindfulness and *patthana* means 'application'. These teachings are called 'The Four Applications or Foundations of Mindfulness'. They are part of the Theravadin tradition but also form part of the Mahayana path (Nyanaponika Thera 1962; Thich Nhat Hanh 1990; Chogyam Trungpa 1991; Sogyal Rinpoche 1992; Namkai Norbu 1996; Venerable U Silananda 2002). The Four Foundations of Mindfulness are: Mindfulness of *Body*, Mindfulness of *Feeling*, Mindfulness of *Phenomena* and Mindfulness of *Mind*. When one examines the Four Foundations of Mindfulness one can recognise their connection to the five *skandhas.*

The Abidharma teachings and the Four Foundations of Mindfulness both provide systematic methods to support one in examining whether, and how, patterns of body, speech and mind form the individual moments of experience which we take as an unbroken continuum, labeled as 'I' or 'self'. The method by which one is directed examine the Abidharma teaching on the five *skandhas* is based on analysis, reasoning, deduction, logic; the method by which one is directed to examine the Four Foundations of Mindfulness is meditation. And it is this latter method that I have been studying and practising throughout the last twenty five years.

I was first introduced to the Tibetan Buddhist practice of meditation by Dzogchen master, Sogyal Rinpoche. As a teacher he does not require students to undertake a lengthy examination as to *whether* the 'I' or 'self' exists, but directs them instead to examine, through the study and the practice of meditation, *how* this sense of 'self' arises. In this way students are guided to examine their own dispositional/habitual patterns of clinging to the aggregates/*skandhas* and grasping after momentary experiences of 'self' to the end of directly experiencing that they (the aggregates) are

empty (*shunya*)[80] of a 'self' but full of experience. Within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition there are many different methods that one can use to examine and reflect on *how* the thinking mind grasps after momentary experiences of 'self', one of which is the practice of meditating on the eight types of consciousness.

According to the Buddhist tradition these eight consciousnesses comprise five sensory consciousnesses, which are based on the five sense organs - eye, ear, nose tongue, body - and three mental consciousnesses. The sixth consciousness is the aspect of mind that cognizes or discerns. According to Dzogchen master Trungpa Rinpoche, the sixth consciousness acts as a switchboard in relation to the first five sense consciousnesses: 'When you see a sight and hear a sound at the same time, the sight and sound are synchronized by the sixth sense to constitute aspects of a single event' (Chogyam Trungpa 1991, p. 26). He describes the sixth sense as having a 'domestic' function. It notices, differentiates and co-ordinates the incoming information so that it comes through efficiently.

The seventh consciousness is the conceptual and reactive aspect of mind. Although there is a *gap* between the sixth and seventh consciousness it can be very short.[81] The point of meditation is to remain as long as possible in the sixth consciousness, in order to slow down the reaction of the seventh and in this way to be *present with* the experience as it arises, rather than separating oneself from it by being distracted from it by mental commentary (Sleeger et al 2007). When there is no space between the sixth and seventh consciousness, the latter becomes the domain of ego in which all our various perceptions are evaluated in terms of habitual patterns of projections subject and object: 'I' and 'mine'; I like it. I don't like it. I'm indifferent. According to Buddhist tradition, if one can educate the seventh consciousness and through listening/studying, contemplation and meditation, then the seventh consciousness becomes an invitation to wisdom. The eighth consciousness is described as being the ground of our being, the conscious, cognizant and aware aspect of mind, unaltered and unalterable. It is, according to this tradition, beyond words – hence potentially problematic in terms of the research enquiry itself, and what it considers to be knowledge or knowing that can be substantiated.

The question as to whether 'I' exists as a single, independent, truly existing 'self' or ego has always been central to both Eastern Philosophy (including the Buddhist meditative tradition of mindfulness/ awareness) and Western Philosophy. However, there was in the past, little dialogue between these traditions about their respective investigations and findings in this regard. This situation has now changed and in recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of western academics/scholars, from the fields of Philosophy, Science, Cognitive Science and Psychology who have investigated the concept of 'self' through engaging with the philosophical underpinnings, modes and methods of inquiry from both traditions (Guenther and Kawamura 1975; Varela et al 1993; Rosch 1997; Wallace 1998; 2003; Watson et al 1999; Pickering 1997; Galin 2003; Shusterman 2008).

The outcomes of their studies have yielded many valuable insights into how both of these philosophical traditions conduct their research into nature of 'self'. I have taken the opportunity that this text-based strand of my research provides, to examine and reflect on some of the investigations carried out in this area to the end of deepening my understanding and simultaneously making more transparent how some of the questions/experiences about the nature of 'self' that I have encountered through my practice of Mindfulness Meditation, impact on my processes of invention. In recent years these questions/experiences have become increasingly more central to this process even though their impact on the emergent choreographic works is subtle and may seem to be indirect.

Cognitive Scientist, Francisco Varela, sets up his comparative study into how both the Eastern and Western reflective traditions have investigated this contradiction between an on-going sense of 'self' and the absence of an independent, fixed or unitary 'self' within the world of his experience by arguing that some of the greatest minds in the tradition of Western philosophical thought might have been inhibited in their attempts to examine this phenomenon by the limitations of the methodologies underpinning their discipline. He argues, citing many examples, that whilst the application of abstract theoretical critical/analytical frames, has enabled many Western philosophers to write insightfully about their own experience of this 'gap',

it has not provided them with a methodology to investigate it further in their disciplinary practice.

According to Varela, Hume withdrew in his writings from trying to resolve the contradiction between an on-going sense of 'self', and the absence of an independent, fixed or unitary 'self' within the world of his experience, and resigned himself, instead, to the separation of life and reflection:

> For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, or heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception (Hume 1740 cited in Varela 1997, p.60).

Varela argues that Hume was not alone in refusing to confront the contradiction between his on-going sense of 'self' and the absence of 'self' in the world of his experience; that Sartre avoided it by saying we are 'condemned' to a belief in 'self', and that in his famous statement, 'I think, I am', Descartes simply leaves untouched the nature of the 'I' that thinks, by jumping to the conclusion that 'I' am a thinking *thing* (res cogitans) rather than keeping his attention on the very *process* of mind itself (Varela1997).

Many scholars investigating the concept of 'self' from both Western and Eastern perspectives consider Kant's argument that no real 'self' is given to us in our experience and that no fixed and abiding 'self' can present itself in that flux of inner appearance, to be very similar to the Buddhist view, which points to the absence of a substantial self in the momentariness of experience (Varela et al 1997; Bibtol 2006; Varela and Natalie Depraz 2006). However, Varela argues that although Kant posits a pure, original, and unchangeable consciousness - the transcendental ego - as a ground of being, he does not investigate our tendency to believe in a 'self'. In positing that there must be a condition, which he names as pure original unchangeable consciousness - 'transcendental apperception' (Kant 1963, cited in Varela et al 1997, p.70) - which precedes all experience and makes experience itself possible Kant, according to Varela, heightens our predicament by telling us that there

really is a 'self', but that we can never know it. Varela contrasts this with the Buddhist mindfulness/awareness tradition whereby one is directed to hold the puzzle of the absence of a substantial 'self' in momentariness of experience in mind and to recognise how the grasping towards a 'self' occurs within any given moment of experience (Varela et al 1997).

Philosopher of Physics Michel Bitbol argues that historically Western philosophy was constrained in investigating the 'gap' between our sense of identity on the one hand, and the absence of this 'self' as a fixed unit on the other, because of the demands for coherence between new theories and an older philosophical background 'whose roots are profoundly embedded in the (partly religious) Western forms of life' (Bitbol 2006, p.338). The problem, he argues, is that these constraints, which were relatively easy to cope with in classical physics, are still deep-seated and present resistances to the difficulties and paradoxes in modern (relativistic and quantum) physics and to recent radical varieties of transcendental philosophy of science which are pragmatic, dynamical, relationist and nondualist (Bitbol 2006, p.339).

Varela argues that it has proved difficult for western philosophers to investigate the 'gap' between a sense of self/identity on the one hand, and the absence of this 'self' as a fixed unit, because the methodologies of the former, being predicated on the application of abstract theoretical critical-analytical paradigms, cannot capture the richness of experience, but can only be a discourse *about* that experience (Varela et al 1997, p.17). This, according to Varela, may very well explain why the phenomenologist, Husserl, despite his important challenge to science as taking 'idealized formulations of mathematical physics as descriptions of the way the world really is, independent of the knowing subject' (Husserl 1970, cited in Varela et al 1997, p.17), ignored, in his methods of examination, the direct embodied aspect of experience. Meanwhile Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, according to Varela, who both stressed the pragmatic and embodied context of human experience, were inevitably bound, in their writings, to explicate embodied existence in a manner that was always after the fact (Varela 1997).

The continuing privileging of discourse *about* lived experience in Western philosophy, even when that lived experience is being rigorously examined as part of a disciplinary practice, e.g. meditation, dance, choreography and/or performance, is not insignificant in the case of writing about creative process, and has, I would argue, contributed to the continuing separation of knowledge production within the academy into the binaries of theory/ abstraction and practice/experience, leaving the latter, as has already been discussed, struggling to assert its equivalence, and in many instances having to strongly protest its status and relevance.

The formal practice of Mindfulness Meditation, which is considered within Tibetan Buddhism as a preliminary practice, is taught as a method of 'remembering', through the training and relaxation of attention, the nature of one's mind, which is described within this tradition as being inherently 'conscious, cognizant and aware' (Sogyal Rinpoche 1992). It is one of the many practices that Sogyal Rinpoche teaches in his overall aim to inspire through his work 'a quiet revolution' in the whole way we look at life and care for the living and also in the whole way we look at death and care for the dying. According to him this 'revolution' begins with the mind and with a commitment to 'bringing the mind home' through the skillful application of methods to support one to turn one's mind inward, to release and relax (Sogyal Rinpoche 1992). Through developing one's awareness in this way one learns to skillfully cut through the thinking mind's tendency to grasp after, be seduced and indeed distracted by the delusion of one's 'self' as a fixed unit. It is widely acknowledged by all who study, practice and teach meditation that it requires courage, intelligence, gentleness and fearlessness to work with oneself and, by default, with others in this way (Sogyal Rinpoche 1992; Namkai Norbu 1992; Trungpa Rinpoche 1991, 1996, 2002).

Modes and methods of inquiry appropriated from the formal practice of meditation have become slowly integrated into my choreographic practice over a long period of time. They support me in remaining 'undistracted' by habitual patterns of thoughts and emotions, especially those that are generated by my fear of failure, and indeed my hope for success, as they arise at key decision-making moments in the process of inventing original choreographic works. Awareness engendered by the training and

relaxing of attention through the formal practice of meditation does not, in my experience, diminish the intensity of those moments when those 'confident voices from a more superficial level that claim to know best' (Brook 1998, p.92) clamber for attention, but it has enabled me to develop my capacity to stay *present with* them. Remaining *present with* them provides the possibility for them to be either dissolved or destroyed by the sharp insight that comes with awareness, thereby providing the possibility for the 'impulses in the hidden zone' (Brook 1998, p.92) to become more fully revealed.

Towards a Schematics of the choreographic process of invention

Critical meta- processes/modes and methods of inquiry appropriated from Hawkins contemporary dance technique, Buddhist Mindfulness Meditation practices and the Somatic practices of Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement, which I have introduced as 'internal' to my choreographic practice, function as interrelated and overlapping strands of my studio-based research process. They support my development as an artist who, according to Melrose (2005, p.182) 'thinks (in expert practice) geometrically, diagrammatically, schematically and multi-dimensionally, rather than in the linear dominant mode bound-in to writing'. A most basic schematics of my choreographic practice is its relational orientation, i.e. to a present other, held in mind as well as materially, in space. That other may at times, as we have seen above, be the witness, rather than the conventional spectator.

The above interrelated and overlapping strands of my practice contribute to the on-going refinement of the operations of my reflective judgment/decision-making processes, not least because they provide, in part, for the emergence of schemata that I can use to observe and experiment with creative impulses, themes and concepts throughout the process of invention. According to Eco (Eco 1997, cited in Melrose, 2002) '[r]ather than observe (and hence produce schemata), the reflective judgment produces schemata to be able to observe and experiment'.

In this particular research undertaking, however, I am setting out to do both, producing schemata on the basis of observation, and producing schemata that allow observation: to gently slide the process of writing in and through the surfaces of these disciplinary practices to support me to observe, by which I intend, to examine and reflect on the schemata producing reflective judgment/decision-making processes *already* operating in my choreographic practice and to simultaneously examine and reflect on, if and how, I might integrate writing as one of the generative and observational strands of the latter. As I examine and reflect on the 'critical meta-processes' (including the newly emerging role and function of writing) that are 'internal' to my studio-based practice, their fluid relationship to each other and to each emergent work becomes more transparent. It simultaneously becomes apparent that the matrices of decision-making processes that underlie my studio-based practice are of necessity always evolving as a result of the constant transformation, destruction and regeneration of the schematics themselves. There can be no single synoptic model of my own choreographic practice, since Massumi's 'qualitative transformation' **(**Massumi 2002, p.3) is always also involved.

The studio and text-based critical meta- processes, thus observed, resemble, I would argue, an Oroborous[82], an autopoietic system; a living, open rather than closed system. In Maturana and Varela,

> An autopoietic machine is a machine organized (defined as a unity) as a network of processes of production (transformation and destruction) and of components which: (i) through their interactions and transformations continuously regenerate and realize the network of processes (relations) that produced them; and (ii) constitute it (the machine) as a concrete unit in space in which they (the components) exist by specifying the topological domain of its realization as such a network (Maturana and Varela 1980, p.78).

The term autopoiesis was originally conceived as an attempt to characterize the nature of living systems. A canonical example of an autopoietic system is a biological cell. The cellular structure, based on an external flow of molecules and energy, produces the components that in turn, continue to maintain the organized bounded structure that gives rise to these components. Analogizing of the

relationship between the many sub-strands strands of the overall research frame and the cellular structures in the body, serves to explicate how the 'internal' process of the studio-based practice, which I have described as resembling, in part, an autopoietic process, function through their topological links with other strands, within the overall complex schematics of the practice. This autopoietic link between the schemata of the practice and the operations of reflective judgment/decision-making provides the conditions for the invention of original choreographic works that include, as examples of mixed-mode theoretical practices, the pieces entitled 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' produced as part of this research undertaking. These choreographies are not the property of any one component of the process of invention; instead they emerge[83] out of a multiplicity of relatively simple, layered and overlapping processes informed, in part, by my 'expert, arts-disciplinary mastery' (Melrose 2003) of principles and practices drawn from contemporary and post-modern dance performance, the somatic practices of Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement and Buddhist philosophy and mindfulness meditation.

> 'Creativity is first of all an act of destruction' (Picasso, cited Bogart 2001, p.54).

At their most fundamental level the discipline-specific practices identified above are underpinned by techniques, modes and methods of inquiry designed to support one to achieve specific ends. In practising and studying them one follows a predetermined path of inquiry. To this extent they provide for the development of what might be described as teleological judgment: skill, craft, mastery, know-how, techne, focused on the production of a recognizable outcome. One of my aims in making them transparent is, paradoxically, to provide, if necessary, for their dissolution/destruction in the process of invention so that the perfection of method does not become an end in itself and the emergent work merely an expression of technical proficiency. As I start each new process of invention I want, and I need, to be prepared to go beyond specific predetermined modes and methods of inquiry so as to provide space for the apparently orderly logic of method and the apparently chaotic 'logic' which permeates the desire to create, to collide. The biggest

challenge, in my experience, is for me to remain adequately present in the face of this collision so that I can 'recognize'[84] any 'expert-intuitive insights' (Melrose 2003) that might get revealed in that instant and then provide for them to emerge, through a multiplicity of actions and re-actions - preferably-not-too-pre-determined - into choreographic theoretical practices and/or improvised performances.

Figure 50

"Audience 1 Walters" (2007) | Limerick City Gallery | Photographer: Matthew Gidney

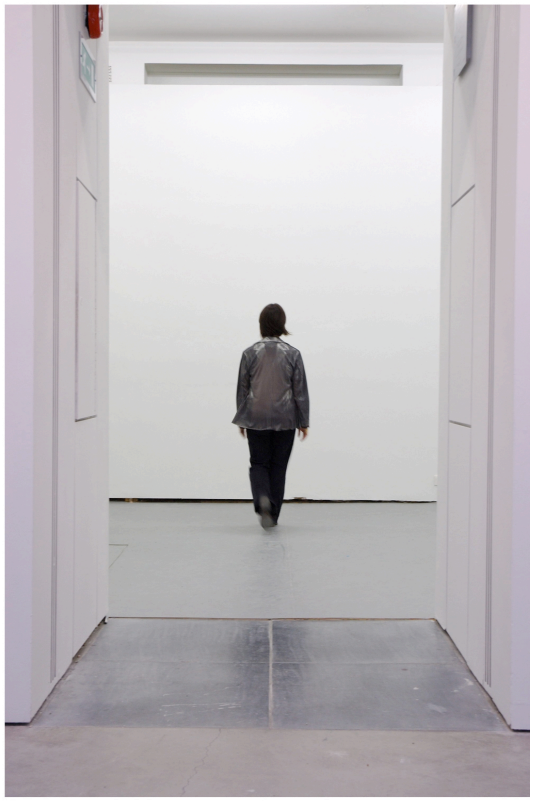

Figure 51

"Audience 1 Walters" (2007) | Dancer: Mary Nunan | Photographer: Matthew Gidney

Figure 52

Figure 53

‘“Audience (1) Waltzers” (2007)
Limerick City Gallery
Photographer: Matthew Gidney

Figure 54

Figure 55

"Audience (1) Waltzers" (2007)
Limerick City Gallery
Photographer: Matthew Gidney

Figure 56

Figure 57

"Audience (1) Waltzers" (2007)
Limerick City Gallery
Photographer: Matthew Gidney

Strand 3

'Every beginning is a deep end… ' (Nunan interviewed by Theodores 2003, p.198).[85]

> *And so I open the door of the studio and enter the space. Today I begin by walking. Feeling the sensation of my foot surface touching the ground. Soft sensation in the ankle joint, yielding into the floor surface pushing into the space* (Journal extract 2006).

> The most difficult path for the artist to tread is the one that doesn't exist. Yet it is the only possibility for an artist involved in the initial identification of a new idiom. In doing so the artist assumes considerable risk. But there is an interesting view from this wild uncharted path. From its vantage point the well worn routes seem quite absurd: Is Fred Asparagus the only guy who is long and green and dances beautifully (Jill Johnson, 1968).[86]

The research paths that I tread in my choreographic practice can be broadly defined as falling into two primary, inter-related, but distinct and distinctive, categories. In the first category research is carried out and knowledge/insight is produced by following very clearly defined pathways mapped out by modes and methods of inquiry appropriated from contemporary and post-modern dance techniques together with the Somatic practices of Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement, and Mindfulness Meditation. The process of mastering these modes and methods of inquiry has required that I follow tried, tested and retraceable paths the direction of which are predetermined in advance.

Methods drawn from the tradition of contemporary and post-modern dance performance support me in experimenting with movement vocabulary evolved from, and reflective of, already 'known' techniques[87], whilst methods drawn from Body-

Mind Centering and Authentic Movement support me in going beyond the vocabulary/steps prescribed by 'known' techniques and in 'discovering' movement[88] - which, once discovered or uncovered, inevitably arrives at a moment of recognition, realization and actualization. (In other words, I know where and when to stop, because something new, of my own, has been recognized, in terms of my own aesthetic). In addition, methods drawn from the practice of Mindfulness Meditation support me in developing an awareness of the activity of my 'known' and habitual patterns of thoughts and emotions. They also support me in becoming acquainted with the 'thinking mind's'[89] tendency towards distraction and in recognizing the ways in which it can get pulled by sense perceptions, thoughts, feelings and other emotions, from remaining *present with* the simple task of attending to the 'object'[90] of research, be it the sensation of movement and/or a 'finished' choreographic work. As part of my overall practice, I have pursued, and indeed continue to pursue, certain research questions by following these modes and methods of inquiry and they have led, and continue to lead me, to unexpected ends. However, these ends, no matter how unexpected, are always, to a greater or lesser extent, predetermined by the methods involved.

In the second category, research is conducted and choreographic 'theories' (or mixed-mode theoretical practices) emerge out of the application of very different processes. One key difference is that whilst knowledge production in both categories is, to a large degree, determined by the methods used, in this second category these methods are not predetermined: instead they are articulated progressively in the actional processes themselves. Throughout the process of invention these two distinct and distinctive approaches to knowledge production function as importantly separate, but strongly linked and overlapping, strands of my practice. In effect, I have at my disposal and can draw, where appropriate, on skills mastered through the study and practice of the modes and methods of inquiry underpinning contemporary and post-modern dance, choreography and performance techniques together with the somatic practices of Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement and the practice of Mindfulness Meditation, for example. However the process of invention is not predetermined by these sets of skills and understandings; instead they help facilitate the emergence of choreographic works in the process of invention.

I know I don't want to make the dance that I know how to make. I have a desire to open beyond that, always. Therefore, my process of inventing each choreographic work and the 'choreographic-theoretical model' embedded in it inescapably requires me to find both the aim/question and the method simultaneously. The experience of finding both simultaneously is perhaps well encapsulated in Picasso's much quoted declaration, '*Je ne cherche pas, je trouve'*. Plainly, however, Picasso's '*je trouve'* is based implicitly on an unnamed painterly expertise, durational in kind – by which I mean that it is acquired at length, and bears the mark of successful previous inventions. 'Successful', in turn, supposes work that has been made public; that has been evaluated by a highly critical international audience, and judged, as Melrose (2009) argues, to be both singular and signature-bearing: invention, in other words, requires expertise in the art-making practices, that expertise is internalized may be overlooked as such by the artist her or himself, and includes a capacity for invention. I quote Picasso here for the simple reason that his name is already widely judged to attract attention, to attach to the new, and to mark something already judged to be singular (or 'singular enough').

In this Strand of writing I am setting out to explore if writing, when integrated into my choreographic practice, might play its part in supporting me to dance beyond, over, above and through what I 'know' in my process of invention, discursivising it as complementary to other practice modes, on the way and also drawing inspiration from the findings of fellow travelers, specifically those contemporary dance artists/choreographers and/or performers who have conducted higher degree research into their professional practice (Sanchez Colberg 1992; Claid, 1998; Rubidge, 2000; Gilson Ellis 2000; Reeves 2009). I'm interested to know if, and how, writing might support me to step off the path, to leap in new directions, to imagine the *new* in my work. This means that writing in this specific chapter/Strand won't, therefore, be underpinned by research paradigms or methods appropriated from 'writerly' disciplinary paradigms, nor only focused on examining or reflecting on the disciplinary paths/methods and modes of inquiry that I have mastered in my development as an artist (as was the case in the previous Strand).

> Friends would ask us what we were aiming at, but since we were groping in the dark we had to discover our aims as we went along (Brook, 1998 p.135).[91]

To date I have, as a choreographer, groped along many dark paths in the process of inventing over thirty professionally-produced (appendix i) and critically acclaimed (appendix ii) original choreographic works. However, it would be extremely difficult for me to retrace the exact steps or to indentify and replicate, in a linear and logical fashion, the conditions that provided for any one of these choreographies to emerge from any one process of invention; the truth is that there is no such single process, as far as I am concerned. Others, however, are likely to see patterns that recur in the 'completed' choreographic works, to which my creative signature seems to be im-*pressed* or attach.

This is not to suggest that each choreographic work emerges from a process of invention that is entirely random and without method. Unfortunately I have not yet mastered the art of method-less Creation – if indeed there is one. What I want to suggest, however, is that the methods used to invent each choreographic work are never entirely predetermined; they too emerge in significant part, and in the ways I relate to them, in the process of invention and through my engagement with changing contingent factors.

And when I say that there are times, throughout the process of invention that I don't 'know', I intend to mean that I don't always know, in words, and exactly, something that needs to be, in its particularity, *new* (to me), albeit recognizable as mine. There is a strong tradition that recognizes that 'knowledge' operates in different stages. According to Einstein, for example, cited in Stinson (1995), for him 'visual and kinaesthetic images came first; the words of a theory came later'. Yet traditionally that 'later theorisation' has taken precedence in the university, obliged, as a consequence, to *look back* while an artist tries to look forward.

In the process of inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' the feelings/sensations that I wanted to explore came first and their practico-theoretical choreographic structures coming only later. However, the relationship between the

feelings/sensations, the emergent practico-theoretical works and the act of writing was more layered than that described in Stinson's (2005) example, above, not least because throughout each process of invention I constantly moved back and forth between all three, often turning to writing to help me to access the former and to flesh them out. The journal extracts below, provides one example of how I used writing, at the very early stage of the process of inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', in order to tease out some emergent questions about the role of the audience.

I am lying on the floor in the studio, thinking about the role of the audiences and my relationship with them in this work. I reflect on how I feel when I am going to a performance as a member of an audience. How open am I? How receptive? I can certainly feel a little uncertain if the situation is new. I often feel wary - especially if I'm asked to be intimate immediately - it can feel forced - by intimate I mean if I'm asked to touch someone or be touched, or engage in conversation with someone I don't know. I am interested in trying to set up a situation whereby the audience's active role in how a performance unfolds might come more to the fore. This does not have to mean (but does not have to exclude) that they might speak or draw or move, I'm hoping for something more subtle …. (Journal extract 2006).

The above journal extract did not necessarily provide me with a choreographic solution but it helped me eliminate some options: clearly members of the audience were not going to be invited to touch or talk to each other as part of this work.

Lloyd Newson's response to a question that I put to him at a Theatre Forum conference in the University of Limerick about whether he might allow the script, which he was developing at that time , to represent many voices was -'No, I want to take a position'. If I start from that place with this piece what position do I take? Does it evolve rather than being pre-determined and how do I monitor its evolution?

I would like to say to the audience, directly and hopefully playfully - what you see depends on where you position yourself, or are positioned .

I am interested in audiences and what happens to the relationship with audience in performance. Am I too polarized in my view, audience/artist, is there as space between where they might both meet and if there is how do we get there? Maybe. But the reply becomes another question - how is that space created (Journal Extract 2006)?

I circled for a number of months around these questions about audience, choreography, dance, relationships, performance - imagining, moving, drawing, writing - before the choreographic concept/frame for this work eventually emerged. It was only then that I started to develop the movement material for this piece. At this stage I didn't write so often in my journal. It's not that I didn't have any more decisions to make I just didn't need to write about them because I processing them directly through the medium of movement.

The process of inventing 'Return Journey' had a very different starting point than that of 'Audience (1) Waltzers'. The seed for the former emerged one day when I was doodling in the dance studio, playing with the action of putting on and taking off my coat whilst walking. I became very interested in the rhythmical patterns and spatial pathways that were happening in both the upper and lower body as I performed this action. And as I repeated the movement I became intrigued by the complexity and the simplicity of these rhythms and patterns.

By doing the action, repeatedly, not following the effect, something opens. The constant repetition returns me to the action. I am not following the meaning that it evokes, not chasing after anything, just constantly returning to place my attention on the act of simply doing the movement (Journal extract 'Return Journey', 2007).

At that time I was also choreographing the filmed material for 'Return Journey', which I had originally intended to be shown as a three-screen installation, without

any live performance element. However, one day it occurred to me that I would like to have two dancers constantly circling the performance space, repeating the action of putting on and taking off their coats, as part of this installation. I made this decision quite quickly and therefore did not have rely as heavily on journal writing to help me clarify my ideas, as was the case during the early stages of the process of inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers'

Writing, however, served a particular purpose throughout the live performance of 'Return Journey'. During this durational piece (which was performed by Mary Wycherley, Inmaculada Pavon and I) there was always, at any one time, two dancers walking in the performance space putting on and taking off their coats. The live performance ran continuously for eight hours each day for the duration of the installation and the rotational system for the dancers was such that we never had an opportunity to speak to each other during these eight-hour performance periods. Therefore, we agreed to share our experiences by leaving notes for each other in the dressing room. As the choreographer I also used my notebook, from time to time, give some directions to the other two dancers.

I'm trying to find the balance between being contained in my own gestures and connecting with the other dancer in the space. Would like us to try through movement and rhythms and some eye contact to connect more strongly with each other from time to time (Mary Nunan, notes from the performance of Return Journey 2008).

I cracked something today, and it wasn't an egg!! I can make eye contact with the other dancer if I focus on the corner. This allows me to scan without deliberately looking. Therefore I can connect gesturally by using my peripheral vision (Mary Wycherley, notes from the performance of Return Journey 2008).

I'll try the 'corner' focus. Also let's remember to release into the floor so that from time to time we make sounds with our feet - not all the time but as we turn, sound of foot pressing the floor or the other foot

dragging, sliding, squeaking etc. Let's also remember sensation, so we don't get too ghostly (Mary Nunan, notes from the performance of Return Journey 2008).

The choreography-for-camera, 'HaH', provides another example of how writing was integrated into my process of invention and also, in this instance, into the completed work. I had intended to use filmed footage of this work to simply document two live performances of 'Audience (1) Waltzers' - to be submitted as part of this research undertaking. However, I was concerned that, whilst it served the purpose of documentation, the camera's, unedited, wide shot perspective could not provide for the sense of intimacy/touch, so essential the choreography, to be experienced. And so I decided to review all of the footage to see if elements of it could be used to create, through a process of editing, a choreography that might better capture the overall sense/feeling of 'Audience (1) Waltzers' (including those passages when the dancer is not visible). Dance artist and filmmaker Mary Wycherley (appendix iii), who shot the original footage, collaborated with me on this project and slowly 'HaH' began to take on a life of its own as a short choreography-for-camera.

Decisions made in the process of editing 'HaH' were very much informed by my interest in providing for this dance, to be experienced somatically despite the challenges of doing this when the images are presented on a small screen. 'Close-ups' of movement are used to highlight/evoke the sense/sensation of touch as is the spoken text, below, which I wrote. The latter was integrated into the sound score composed for the film by Jurgen Simpson (appendix iii).[92]

Sensation of foot surface touching ground sound,
down, dropping, fall, stepping, push
shhhhhh skin surface touching wall, all tick , tactile, lil light bone surface silvery sheath
touching ivory, yielding white, bright,
heart surface touching
breath surface touching space
spinning time in circles
skip, side back front, side again, skip again, stop,
hop hup-pu pu pu and up,
together now again turning returning
dancing

'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' each emerged from my commitment as an artist to follow sensations. Starting with a commitment to follow sensations is very different from starting with a commitment to follow a particular methodological formula. I have called these sensations red threads. As such, I have recognized their capacity to lead me somewhere, where that destination is partly unknown, but conceivable ('dance', for example, is a relatively stable site of art-making, and it retains that stability wherever it is recognized and named as such).

Each process of invention is layered and complex and the overall practice is constantly evolving: it turns and returns around many deeply felt but always - essentially-not-yet-and perhaps never-to-be-worded sensations - red threads of intuitive and instinctual processes - that infuse my desire to continue to create original choreographic works. Red threads are not made of the yarn, they do not unfold from a spool; I experience them sometimes as almost-a-smell; sometimes as almost-something-seen; sometimes as almost-a-taste; sometimes as almost-something-heard, and sometimes as almost-something-touched/felt.

Throughout the process of inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' I set out to create the conditions to access these subtle almost-beyond-reach sensations in an attempt to produce what Melrose (2002, p.2) refers to as the curious art of hypotyposis. Citing Paul de Mann (P. de Mann, cited in Sheldon Sacks 1979) on metaphor, she suggests that the ancient rhetorical notion of hypotyposis can be roughly described as relating to the highly economical production of a type of figuration – for example, a choreographed gesture, a look or a touch (in Kant hypotyposis can be either structural or symbolic[93]):

> which makes present, to the senses, something which is out of their reach, not because it does not happen to be there but because it consists, in whole or part, of elements too abstract for sensory representation.

In Massumi's terms, affect, for example, is present to the senses, but not yet identifiable in terms of named and familiar emotions (Massumi 2002). Not quite

present to the senses, here, supposes that the choreographer and/or performer have the capacity to evoke, without representing; in each instance, hypotyposis supposes that a spectator has the capacity to unfold, to elicit, to extend, to complete, or to refrain from completion, in the case of what performance makes available, much as Picasso's later work has elements of the vivid outline, constituted in such a way that a viewer or spectator's regard is held, over at least a minor period of time. In being held, that regard allows the work to seem to grow, to unfold, or to take on a significance that seems to 'be there', even though it need not be.

As a spectator I am always more engaged and intrigued by those choreographic artists whose works evoke rather than represent. The first time I saw Pina Bausch's 'Café Muller' (1978) I felt my self 'held' in this way. Other artists whose work evokes this response in me include choreographers Trisha Brown, Jonathan Burrows, Rosemary Butcher, Yoshiko Chuma, Joan Davis, Steve Paxton, and Yvonne Rainer, film/visual artist Bill Viola, performance artist Nigel Rolfe, Irish Traditional musicians Martin Hayes and Caoimhin O'Raghallaigh and playwright Samuel Beckett. They each achieve this is different ways through their work. One of my aims in inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' was to investigate how I might create choreograph structures to evoke sensations, rather than represent emotions. When I set out on create each of these works I did not exactly know how I might do this.

The 'red threads' that I followed at the early stages of 'Audience (1) Waltzers' led me to decide that this piece should not be choreographed for the stage and that the dancer should not be visible all of the time. My sense was that the audience's experience of the dance might be enhanced if the dancer disappears from view, from time to time, leaving traces and memories to be evoked in her absence. The notion of the dancer not being visible all the time also strongly informed the choreographic structure of 'HaH', the filmed adaptation of this work. The decision (made during the process of editing this work) to punctuate the film with still images of the bare walls reflects the option (that audience members have during the live performance) of only looking at the dancer when she passes by the section of the wall towards which they were facing. This device was intended to provide time/space for this

work to be experienced somatically and not only through the sense of sight. As the structure of 'HaH' continued to emerge the walls became quite central to the piece, acting as a texture/feature in their own right, as well, the surfaces across which the dancer passes from time to time.

'Audience (1) Waltzers' is the first work that I conceived for an other-than-theatre environment. At the early stages of the process of inventing it, I didn't know how this work would unfold and/or where I would locate it. However, I am becoming increasingly aware, not least through this process of writing, that my desire to invent this work and indeed all my choreographic works is, to a greater or lesser extent, 'impassioned by the passion of non-knowing' (Caputo 2008, p.5)[94]. It is this passionate not-knowing that makes the processes of invention surprising and exciting even to its inventor, and it is appropriate thus to say that the artist's expertise contains 'not-knowing' within it. This passion for 'not-knowing' is not a passion for ignorance or avoidance. Instead, it is a passion for an expanding awareness, in the process of invention, beyond 'known' habitual patterns of thinking and judging. It is therefore radically different in aspiration from the passion for ignorance that, according to Freud, animates us and causes us to cling to our discredited or perhaps radically undermined illusions (Freud cited Phillips ed. 2006). Freud's argument, according to Phillips, is that the one thing we want to do more than know, is not to know and that, paradoxically, as a result the very way we go about knowing things is the form our greed for ignorance takes (Phillips 2006). From my perspective as artist, I would wonder whether, if the way we go about knowing things is the form our greed for ignorance takes, then perhaps it follows that the way we go about 'not-knowing' might well be the form our passion to go beyond ignorance takes?

However, in my process of invention, as I am seeking to account for it here, I do not experience 'knowing' and 'non-knowing' as binary/oppositional forces, but rather layers and overlapping impulses that continuously pass through each other. When they meet/collide by apparent 'accident', I experience a moment of intuitive insight, which allows me to go forward. According to Bannerman artists often refer to moments of intuitive insights as a 'moment of recognition, acknowledging however, that this was often the 'recognition' of something that they had not previously seen'

(Bannerman 2006, p.15). The poet Seamus Heaney gives description to this 'recognition' as 'the feeling of a gap closing and at the same time, equally and paradoxically, of a space opening' (Heaney 1999).

Each choreographic work that I invent is new but each also contains elements of the other, unfolding in time and feeding back from the first to the most recent: this supposes a type of knowing that is accumulative; that involves a growing expertise, but which has nothing necessarily to do with words. Some of the layers of this linkage are discernible, in the conceptual, dramatic, emotional, kinetic and somatic modeling and content of these finished choreographic works, whilst others, are much less so. I am curious as to whether – and how - (my) writing might provide for these less-than-obvious layers and processes to become more revealed.

As part of the process of examining and reflecting on how I might integrate writing into my process of invention I trace the word choreography, literally 'dance writing' - or dance's graphics, which might include notation - back to its Greek origins xopeia (circular dance) and 'ypaon' (writing). Its roots in both the practice of dancing and the practice of writing are very clear. By all accounts the practice of dancing preceded the practice of writing about dance; choreography was born out of a motivation to create a method to write about, to describe, movement in order to archive existing dances. Lepecki (2004) highlights this motivation as articulated in Arbeau's book entitled 'Orchesography: A Treatise in the Form of Dialogue Whereby All Manner Of Persons May Easily Acquire and Practice The Honourable Exercise of Dancing', and published in 1589:

> As regards ancient dances all I can tell you is that the passage of time, the indolence of man or the difficulty of describing them has robbed us of any knowledge thereof (Arbeau 1589, cited in Lepecki 2004, p.125).

According to Lepecki (2004), it was after le Père Arbeau's intervention that choreographers then began to invent, rather than simply archive, dances. Interestingly, the dances invented at this time were, according to Franko, frequently likened to and indeed contrived to suggest written text Franko (2001). He gives an

example of how one genre in particular, geometrical dance (which acquired its name from geometrical and symbolic patterns that were designed to be seen from above as if they were horizontal or flat on a page) was described through making use of 'figures'. The latter referred to both the static and mobile aspects of pattern-making in choreography. This strategy pushed the conceit of bodily writing to its ultimate visual consequences. Franko describes how this 'figure' formation could be set in motion while simultaneously maintaining its fixed, or structural, characteristics.

> For instance, dancers could move along the circumference of a spherical path while still maintaining the clarity of the path's spherical shape. Whether still or active, the choreographic 'figure' presented bodies as physical metaphors of written characters or symbolic designs (Franko 2001, p.191).

According to Lepecki, Arbeau's intervention marked a point in the history of Western subjectivity, where 'a certain social (and socializing) activity called dance fell prey to the Stately (and theological) apparatus of capture called choreography' (Lepecki 2007, p.122). This in turn rendered it, he argues, genealogically 'majoritarian' in the sense that 'choreography' names a very specific masculinist, fatherly, Stately, judicial, theological and disciplinary project (Lepecki 2007, p.122).

My position as a writer, woman, dancer, choreographer, is clarified in that regard: my position is not that of the distanced observer concerned with moving forms, be they words or bodies, along predetermined lines. Instead, writing – or graphies - loops from inside to outside to inside, again and again and again, and emerges into form by pressing and being pressed against the constraints of the 'apparatus of alphabet' (Rosen 1986, cited in Ulmer 1994) and the privileging of writing in knowledge production; it also emerges from pressing against and being pressed by the constraints of the 'apparatus of capture' (Lepecki 2007) called choreography, including the choreographies that comprise my body of work, in the process of invention. This desire to press against boundaries can also be felt, literally, in choreographic structure and content of 'Audience (1) Waltzers' and 'HaH'.

I push against these walls, leaning into them and pulling away. This feels satisfying and comforting. How come I find something as hard and cold and unmovable as a cement wall to be comforting? (Journal extract 2006)

In writing out of my 'passion for not-knowing' or my passion to push beyond what I know and my experiences, real and imagined, of inventing original choreographic works, I am setting out to surrender, to the best of my ability, as I do in my studio-based process of invention, any over-reliance on already established modes and methods of inquiry so that I am not bound to tread pathways which are pre-determined by discipline-specific methodological tools and apparatuses – except in so much as the page itself, and its lines, terminology, clause structures and punctuation impose here. Nonetheless, I propose to set out to find new paths by following while being open and responsive to, the sensations of the red threads. Some of these threads might seem to be linear and to go from there to there, but they can also bend, turn around, go slack or break in the process of being woven into the emerging structure of this heuristic frame.

The structure of this strand of writing therefore does not echo what are, according to Chandler, the 'closed textual structures'[95] of conventional academic writing, which, he argues, use univocal textural closure as a way of both controlling the reader and subordinating the topic to the authors purposes (Chandler 2006). It proposes instead a number of layers; it follows, and indeed it weaves and is woven by, a number of red threads, some of which emerge, after a certain time, to be identified in terms of thematic strands. These threads each have a beginning, middle and end but do not, after Godard, unfold in this order: 'a story should have a beginning, middle and end but not necessarily in that order' Film maker Jean Luc Godard (cited in Chandler 2006)[96].

And so the writing, in this text-based stand, continues to move between genres and registers, always keeping the documented practices in mind; words loop through and around the many complex layered and overlapping sensations, questions, emotions, images and aspirations, that beginninglessly, middlelessly and endlessly slip, slide,

crash and collide, under the skin-surface of my practice. In so doing the writing plays its part in weaving a kind a crucible, a contained space, in which the layered and overlapping themes being explored in both the text-based and studio-based strands can be constructed and de-constructed, most usually by design but importantly also by 'accident' throughout the process of invention.

According Parviainen, whose work focuses on epistemological questions concerning dance, the nature of the knowledge that dance artists require in the making of dance includes the knowledge of movement material and how it behaves. This knowledge is part of the artist's expertise, but it is rarely language-based – whence the difficulty for some traditional scholars to grasp its importance. In the process of making, dances artists can, according to Parviainen, seemingly 'accidently' discover procedures for handling the material in a new manner. However, she argues that the internal logic at work in what is inexorably a process of trial and error can only ever be partly captured at least in and through words (Parviainen 2002): on this basis once again an element of performance-making by artists can seem mysterious and resistant to decoding by conventional scholars.

In my experience 'accidents', in the times of making, have the potential to be a creative and/or a destructive force, most usually both together. By destructive I do not intend the kind of calamitous destruction that occurs when an unstoppable force meets, head on, another unstoppable force or an apparently immovable object[97] but rather the destruction, or the dissolution, of ill considered and/or pre-conceived concepts that cause my relationship with the emerging choreography to be obstructed. It is my experience that there are always multiple 'accidents' in every process of invention and whilst they vary in intensity, they are all distinguished by being light and fleeting occurrences that destabilize, interrupt, startle, rupture and reveal.

Accidents by their nature cannot be contrived, but as an artist I am committed to increasing the likelihood for them to happen by refining specific modes and methods of inquiry, in the process of invention, so that the latter might provide for, or indeed

invite, their occurrence: we need to be able to recognize their potential, when they appear, which means that the expertise of the artist is key.

> After all one's art is not the chief end of life but an accident in one's search for reality or rather perhaps one's method of search (W.B. Yeats)[98].

Melrose gives us a sense of the both the fragility of these moments and the difficulty of capturing them through the 'looking-backward process of writing', which is, she suggests, like 'chasing angels' (Melrose 2003). According to Melrose, imposing 'writing's orders on the complexities and differences involved in experience' after the fact of making, cannot quite account for the 'fragile knowledge-status of angel time'. She argues that an angel is marked by luminosity rather than substance, and 'tends to be not-yet-seen but recognizable when she appears, as well as always singular' (Melrose 2003). The angels that I encounter in my processes of invention tend to appear unexpectedly and I have not, as yet, actually ever seen one. They always drop in unbeknownst to me and leave on, or maybe as, a breath, most usually as an exhalation – felt as a penny from heaven, dropping down and out as an extraordinarily ordinary realization of something very obvious.

In the following extract from an interview with Francis Bacon, conducted by David Sylvester, the limitation of imposing the backward looking linear logic of talking, writing, words in coherent extended narratives and the binaries of dualistic judgments on the complexity, and perhaps paradoxically, the simplicity of the process of creating work, is also illustrated:

> since you talk about recording different levels of feeling in one image…you may be expressing at one and the same time a love of the person and a hostility towards them….both a caress and an assault? To which Bacon responds, 'That's too logical. I don't think that's the way things work. I think it goes to a deeper thing: how do I feel I can make this image more immediately real to myself. That's all (Bacon interviewed by Sylvester, cited in Deleuze1981, p.39)'.[99]

However, notwithstanding these challenges I continue, in this practice-led research undertaking, to examine and reflect on how writing might to do its part in supporting

me in creating a space where the angel of 'real' time can be sensed and felt in her luminosity, like the surface of breath, moist and warm on the space it touches; I am looking to writing to support me in turning my ideas into movements and choreographies that might provide for the audience to experience a revolution, redolent, after Kristeva, of intimacy (Kristeva 2002).

In this research undertaking the writing also revolves, looking backwards, remembering, forwards, intuiting. It looks from side to side to get support and inspiration from other artists and scholars. It looks and leaps upwards, imagining, and it looks downwards for safety and security in landing. It turns and turns and turns inside and out, and…

The first professional choreographic work that I invented, entitled 'Search', was premiered in Dublin in 1983. This was solo work, which I choreographed and also performed. It marked the beginning of the continuously unfolding process that is my choreographic practice and each work invented since then is linked to this beginning. Looking backwards I find that I have no written record of the process of inventing this work. I have a memory of it emerging, as do all my choreographies, from my need to explore and express some sensations that were hovering beyond the grasp of my conscious mind. What is clear is that it emerged from a process of experimentation with the kinetic/expressive (at that stage I was not consciously working from a somatic perspective) possibilities of movement and touch, shown to and shared with others - hence the event of performance; in other words the process of invention was not initially inspired by, nor indeed rooted in an exploration of a specific 'story', theme, emotion, piece of music or text or 'prop'[100].

At a certain stage in the process of creating 'Search' I was given a copy of Samuel Beckett's novel Company. The book opens with the following lines:

> A voice comes to one in the dark. Imagine.
> To one on his back in the dark. This he can tell by the pressure on his hind parts and by how the dark changes when he shuts his eyes and again when he opens them again (Beckett 1980).

I remember feeling very strong resonances between the sensations I experienced reading this book and the sensations that I was exploring in the process of creating 'Search' so I decided that I would like to integrate spoken extracts of the text into the emerging choreography. I wrote to Mr. Beckett requesting his permission to do this and this. He replied:

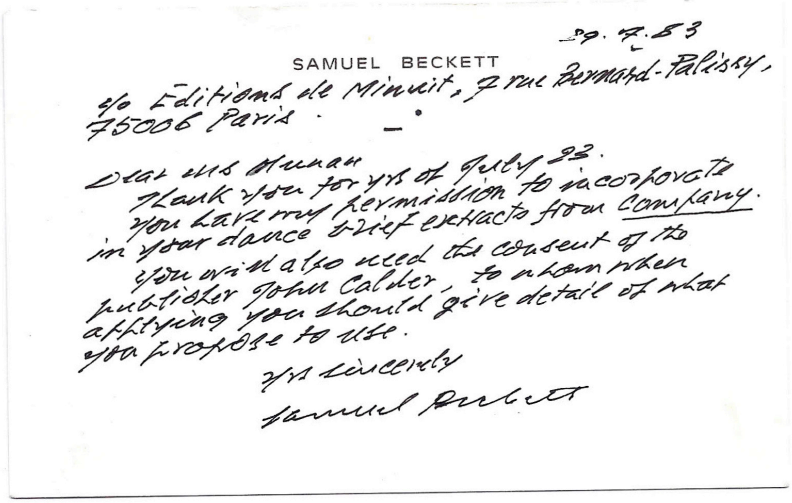

Figure 58

Letter from Samuel Beckett (1983)

Almost twenty five years later, and some months after the first performance of 'Audience (1) Waltzers' in 2007, I am surprised to feel/see in its choreographic concept and movement material a 'return' to sensations, tones and textures that first surfaced in 'Search' choreographed in 1983. Both works are solo choreographies. In both pieces the walls of the performing space are used as an integral part of the choreography; the dancer reaches, pulls, yields and pushes against these surfaces to evoke the sensation of touch in herself and in the audience. In addition, both choreographies include text and there is a link through costuming also; in both pieces the dancer wears grey something which visually serves to render both pieces similar in tone and texture. I find it interesting to retrospectively reflect on the some of the shared characteristics of these two works. And I also find it valuable to compare the different ways in which the creative impulses driving them manifested in their respective choreographic structures.

I make these comparisons by looking at photographs of works because there is no existing video/DVD recording of 'Search'. I can see from the photographs of 'Search' (figs. 1-4) that in this work I was clearly setting out to express some 'internal' sensations/feelings; however the limitations in my technical understanding/embodiment of movement and my in sense of space are also apparent in these images. Photographs of 'Audience (1) Waltzers' (figs. 50-57) on the other hand reveal, how much (despite its apparently 'pedestrian' nature), my sense of movement (rhythm, phrasing, dynamic) and my sense of space (central and peripheral) has deepened and matured since 1983. It is, I would argue, clear from these photos that I have chosen, rather than been forced by technical limitations, to use very simple movement motifs not least because the options not chosen can be felt, I would argue, 'ghosting' (Melrose 2003) and thickening the work.

One of the reasons that I am so surprised at what transpired to be the many resonances between 'Search' and 'Audience (1) Waltzers' is that I had not consciously decided to return, as part of the process of inventing the latter, to re-work and/or further develop the expressive content, the movement sensations and/or choreographic concepts that I was exploring in the former and yet they surfaced very strongly despite the fact that my primary focus was on an apparently entirely

different set of questions. Melrose (2009) sees in this sort of return, plus the need for qualitative transformation, the emerging marks of artistic signature: artistic signature emerges gradually, over time, and it tends to be relational in its constitution, by which I mean that it emerges from work shown in public and that has been appraised as such so that signature is held in the recall of an other.

Signature is progressively modulated on the basis of relatively fine feedback threads which I may nonetheless not be able to articulate fully – hence the notion of the quest for qualitative transformation: I progressively review the earlier work[101] and how it was received, and without necessarily knowing this from the outset, I revisit material which is characterised then by difference in sameness. Something of interest that has not been fully resolved is likely to remain, and to be called back and reappraised as potentially new material.

Throughout the process of inventing 'Return Journey' questions about audience, and the relationship between audience and performers (which I first started to investigate in 'Audience (1) Waltzers'), continued to surface. In 'Return Journey' I was interested in continuing to explore how I might provide for the audiences to have an intimate experience of this dance. And so I found myself returning to the choreographic device (first introduced in Audience (1) Waltzers') of placing the dancers on the periphery and the audience at the centre of the performing space. In so doing I was also continuing to play with the idea (first explored in 'Audience (1) Waltzers) that by making the dancer(s) disappear, from time to time, I might be able to provide for the audience to have an enhanced somatic experience of the dance.

In 'Return Journey' the dancers' constant repetition of the action of putting on and taking off their coats, together with their constant movement on the periphery of the space are both intended to contribute to their disappearance. My use of repetition is, in this regard, driven by a similar motivation as that ascribed to choreographer Anna Halprin. However, whilst Halprin may have introduced repetition in her work in order to control what she perceived as the vanishing nature of dance, the dying of dance, I am interested in using repetition as a device to make the dancers (or rather the dancers' capacity to perform elaborate passages of virtuosic movement) vanish,

as part of my explorations as to whether this might provide for aspects of this dance to be somatically experienced by the audience in performance.

Knorr Cetina's investigations, in the field of science (widely cited by Melrose between 2003 and the present), into the dynamic, reflexive and affective properties, and specifically the sense of longing at play in the relationship between a researcher and a research 'object' in epistemic practices resonates with my experiences of the longing at play in my relationship with the choreographic 'objects' that comprise my body of work (Knorr Cetina 2001). This is despite the fact that Knorr Cetina is a published writer whose own research enquiry is self-reflexive: it constitutes a meta-theoretical account of complex and constructive research practices. Her research offers me a particular perspective: I feel, yes, I am following a red thread here; it is not only resonant with but also illuminates sensations of longing that I experience in the process of inventing original choreographic works/'objects'.

In Knorr Cetina's investigations the word 'object', is not necessarily understood in the everyday conception of the word characterizing something material. By 'object' in this context, she understands research or 'knowledge objects' as epistemic: they entail knowledge practices as distinct from the widely referenced 'epistemology' (or science of knowledge). Therefore research or 'knowledge objects' may be immaterial, but they involve ways of doing things, ways of understanding things, ways of seeing things: they involve, according to Knorr-Cetina, open question-generating processes that are always in the process of being materially defined.[102] In fact research 'objects', because they are always in the process of being materially defined, paradoxically lack 'objectivity' and therefore could be seen as the very opposite of everyday objects like chairs or tables. One such that is widely recognized in performance is 'investment' by the dancer; another is 'choreographic choices' themselves. Curiously, we tend to recognize them and their importance, without being able to pin them down materially, or analyse them, and yet we also do each of these, in creative decision-making at a later stage.

When I hold my choreographic practice up to the light of Knorr-Cetina's (2001) investigations and turn it this way and that, some dimensions of my relationship with

the finished choreographic 'objects' that comprise my body of work, and also some aspects of my relationship with research 'objects' in the process of invention, become more fully revealed in terms of their status as research-driven, creative and expert. It is precisely because of its lack of 'objectivity', its 'lack in completeness of being', that an 'object' of knowledge is, according to Knorr-Cetina, never quite itself, is non-identical with itself and can therefore never be fully attained by the researcher nor ever fully satisfy the research drive. In expert-practice this means, she argues, that even when an 'object' is officially declared finished and complete the expert-practitioner is always, inevitably, acutely aware of how it could have been improved and what it should have become and did not (Knorr-Cetina 2001), which means that the next work might well be informed by a similar enquiry as well as that sense of frustration.

When I look back at my overall choreographic practice I can see more clearly how past choreographic works function as resistive objects against which I push in my desire, my longing, to encounter the openness of 'non-knowing' in each new process of invention. As a result my evolving signature does not simply serve as a monolithic marker of finished works but folds back into every aspect of my choreographic practice, most especially, into my relationship with each emerging choreographic 'object', informing my intuitive processes and the future, into which my need, my longing, to make the new, to effect a 'qualitative transformation' (Massumi 2002, p.3), is pressed.

Knorr-Cetina's account of how a research 'object' can never really satisfy the research drive that informs it and the larger project resonates with the sensation of incompleteness that I usually experience in relation to finished choreographic works. In the past the resultant sense of failure often led me to get frustrated with what I judged, sometimes perhaps a little despairingly, as something not only lacking in the work but also in myself as an artist. However, perhaps I might now, after Knorr-Cetina, be able to move from judging a specific choreographic 'object' to have failed because it has not developed fully in the way that it could have or should have towards embracing what it is 'not' as a part, in fact a crucial part, of what it 'is'. We are constitutively unable to rest, satisfied, and the urge to make new work begins.

When seen in this light I can appreciate each choreographic work, as an 'unfolding structure of absences' (Knorr-Cetina 2001, p.182) a 'punctuation' in the flow of the overall practice, inevitably providing, because of the lack it displays, pointers for the further exploration of sensations/questions. It is because it suggests which way to look further through the insufficiencies it displays, that it could be said, according to Knorr Cetina, that a knowledge object, 'affectively undergirded', structures desire and as such provides for concatenation and constructive extension of epistemic practices in creative and also disruptive ways (Knorr Cetina 2001, pp.175-188).

> No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better Samuel Beckett (1984).[103]

Circling back to the theme of knowing/not-knowing, I consider how the process of invention requires creativity by which I mean it requires one to have both the commitment and the capacity to follow sensations, to tread the path that doesn't exist, to trust 'disciplinary-specific expert-intuitive un-knowing' (Melrose, 2002, 2003) and to allow both aims and methods to emerge on the way. Creativity, according to May (1975), requires courage.

May (1975) posits that courage is not a virtue or a value among other personal values like love and fidelity: the former, he argues, pales into mere dependency and the later into conformism, without courage. He also argues, citing Kierkegaard, Nietszche, Camus and Sartre, that courage is not the absence of despair. It is, rather, our capacity and indeed commitment to moving ahead, through the multitude of choices we make every day, in spite of despair (May 1975). It is because decision-making requires courage, according to May, that Tillich speaks of courage as ontological - it is essential to our very being (Tillich 1952, cited May 1975, p.14).

> We are called upon to do something new, to confront a no-man's land, to push into a forest where there are no well-worn paths and from which no one has returned to guide us. This is what the existentialists call the anxiety of nothingness. To live into the future means to leap into the unknown, and this requires a degree of courage for which there is no immediate precedent and which few people realize (May 1975, p.12).

In creative practice to be decisive is, according to theatre director Bogart (2001), a violent act[104]. It is also a cruel act which requires 'unrelenting decisiveness, diligence and strictness', in the words of (Artaud 1938, cited in Bogart 2001, p.45). She argues that to achieve the violence of decisiveness – which requires rejection of other options in order to include this one - one has to 'choose death' in the moment by acting fully and intuitively without pausing for reflection about whether it is the right decision or if it is going to provide the winning solution (Bogart, 2001 p.50).

The repetition of the above paragraph exactly as it is written in Strand 2, (p.60) is not intended as a 'flat' return but highlights the inevitable overlap between some aspects of the many thematic strands that I am exploring as I integrate writing into the process of inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH'. Some of these thematic strands spiral vertically downwards and become columns through which the 'red threads' of writing pass, in horizontal pathways, as they too weave and are simultaneously woven into the overall process/container of invention.

When I reflect on my experiences of decision-making in the processes of inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers' 'Return Journey' and 'HaH', I realized there were many times when I faced this metaphoric death as described by Bogart (2001). I cannot say that any one decision making moment was ever so intense as to cause me to experience, what Clement describes as a 'sycnopal eclipse' of thoughts (Clement 1994). However, her account of the latter as 'moments of fragility: anguish, shivering, the void, orgasm - syncope' (Clement 1994, p.164)[105] gives some description to the vulnerability that I felt at those decision-making moment when my mind became stripped of its weapons of habitual thoughts and emotions. Although they can be quite frightening I nonetheless value the temporary disappearance of identity that these moments invite.

When creativity lacks commitment to an encounter with what one does not know, it is according, to May, pseudo creativity. This means, he argues, that it is in service of something else (May 1975, p. 43) and likely to be exhibitionistic, escapist or regressive in its aspirations. He posits the concept of the 'encounter' as not merely a

Bacchic ‘letting go’ but describes it as the sub-conscious and the unconscious acting in unity with the conscious. It is, as a result, he argues, not irrational but supra-rational (May 1975, p.49). He defines creativity as ‘the encounter of the intensively conscious human being with his or her world’ (May 1975, p.54). In May’s words:

> The unconscious seems to take delight (if I may so express it) in breaking through - and breaking up - exactly what we cling to most rigidly in our conscious thinking (May 1975, p.59).

He argues that ‘encounters’ can be frightening because at these moments the world, both inwardly and outwardly, takes on an intensity that may be momentarily overwhelming.

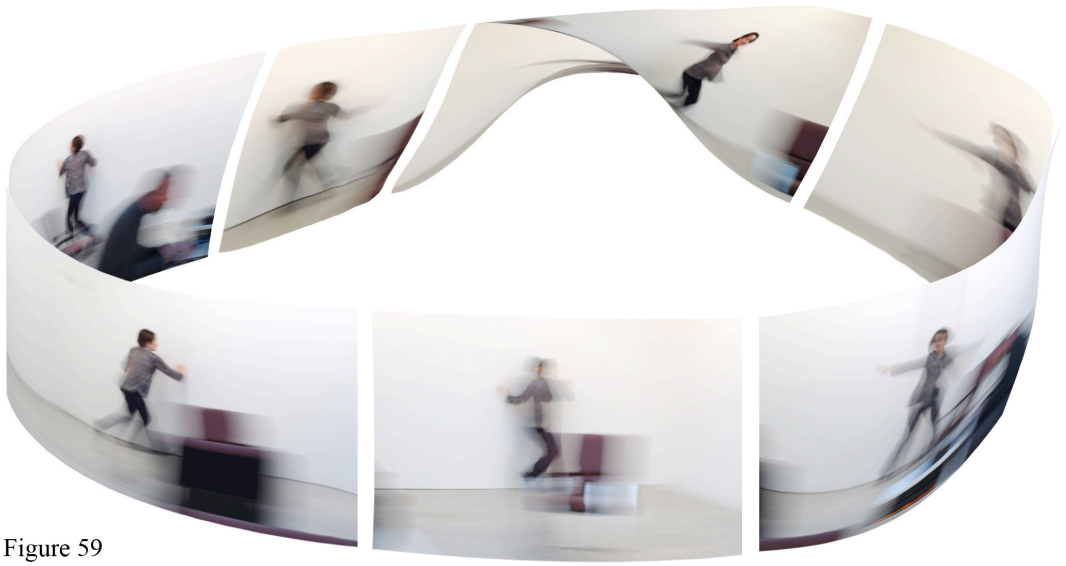

Figure 59

“Audience (1) Waltzers” (2007)
Dancer: Mary Nunan
Photographer: Matthew Gidney

In the process of invention one's habitual thoughts and emotions, fear of failure and hope for success, do not easily 'let go'. The 'I' that 'knows' and un-knows (it is constitutively complex and can be contradictory) feels the intensity of longing and resistance, both, that the risk of a temporary disappearance of identity that 'letting go' invites. The quotes that follow seem to me to be self-explanatory, in those sorts of terms:

> Every time I begin work on a new production I feel as though I am out of my league; that I know nothing and have no notion how to begin and I'm sure someone else should be doing my job, someone assured, who knows what to do, someone who is really a professional. I feel unbalanced, uncomfortable and out of place. I feel like a sham. In short I am terrified (Bogart 2001 p.84).

> The mind has many layers and to reach the layer that is most operative, a struggle must take place between the submerged impulses in the hidden zone and the confident voices from a more superficial level that claim to know best. It is above all the terror of demonstrating indecision in front of judging faces and the need for reassurance that push one towards pretending to know what one wants (Brook 1998, p.9).

> It has suddenly dawned on me that within 24 hours I will have to face four dancers and begin work. Am shit scared despite all the planning (Johnson 2000).

> I hadn't felt well for the first few days at Snape. I was spending rehearsals wrapped in a sleeping bag with a cup of tea, worrying that I was letting the dancers down because I couldn't see what was happening (Lee 2006).

> I'd like to develop a little more objectivity, so I can simply relax, sit down and watch. I think I watch with an expectation. I watch with a kind of fear (Nunan 2003, p. 200).

I weave the above accounts of the emotions of anxiety and fear experienced by practitioners in their processes of invention back through my reflections on May's (1975) argument that creativity requires courage. And threading his argument through the etymology of the word courage, which comes from the same stem as the

French word *coeur* meaning heart, I reflect on Hartley's description of the relationship between the heart, the central organ of the circulatory system in the body, and the latter's other systems.

> There are two major blood flows from the heart. One of them is the flow between the heart and the rest of the body and the other is between the heart and the lungs. The blood flowing from the lungs to the heart is the richest most oxygenated blood. It is carried to the heart in the coronary artery, the vessels of which literally 'crown' the top of the heart. The first cells to receive freshly oxygenated blood from the heart are the heart cells themselves for the heart must be nurtured before it can nurture other cells (Hartley 1995, p.20).[106]

Reflections on how the heart is nurtured by the richest, most oxygenated blood in the body, before it, in turn, nurtures the other cells in the body leads me to consider the heart of my practice is nurtured. In so doing I circle back to my argument that the latter is nurtured, in part, by my 'expert, arts-disciplinary mastery' (Melrose 2003) of modes and methods of inquiry appropriated from contemporary and post-modern dance practices and principles, the Somatic practices of Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement and the study and practice of Mindfulness Meditation and also, now, by the process of examining and reflecting on them in writing in this specific research undertaking. They function collectively in supporting my increased awareness of the myriad of independent and inter-dependent relationships at play in each process of invention including those patterns of hope and fear that can prevent me from having a direct 'encounter' with the emerging material.

> It takes fearlessness and hopelessness to live nakedly in the moment without the reference point of our expectations (Chogyam Trungpa 1991).

Weaving some new themes introduced in this Strand of the text alongside and through others drawn from the previous Strands of this research I begin to imagine the heart of my practice as a space of receptivity and also a receptacle in which all the layers of my process of invention including my experiences of 'knowing' and my passion for 'not-knowing' circulate. This is the space where my relationship with each emerging choreographic work is nurtured and unfolds. I imagine it as a space

that reflects the Platonic concept of Chora[107]. According to (Derrida1987, cited in Ulmer 1994), 'Chora' is one of the least understood, most puzzling and most resistant to interpretation (hermeneutics) of any element in Plato's works. Ulmer cites Derrida as positing that in the relationship between Plato and Socrates, that latter is not Chora but he would look a lot like it/her, if it/she were someone or something; that Plato puts Socrates in its/her place

> which is not just a place among others, but perhaps place itself, the irreplaceable, the unplaceable place from which he receives the word(s) of those before whom he effaces himself but who receive them from him because he it is who makes them talk like this (Derrida 1987b: 281, cited in Ulmer 1994, p.65).

I imagine Chora as the realization of spacious consciousness of Shunyatha[108] which is, according to Buddhist tradition, empty of 'I' and empty of 'other': it is absolutely empty. According to Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche the experience of emptiness lies in realizing that 'there is no 'I' as actor, no action, and no 'other' to be acted upon (Chogyam Trungpa 1991, p.135). Shunyatha is not the nihilistic idea of nothingness, or voidness. It is the complete absence of grasping and fixation –the complete ego-lessness of subject and object. Understanding emptiness involves an appreciation of the mutual dependence of, or reflexive connections between, any phenomenon and its context and the ability to perceive 'true reality' or 'suchness' (tatagathta): to experience, in other words, reality just as it is without the duality imposed by conceptual categories[109].

I know that in this space I can move with Derrida's words, passed on by Ulmer, beyond the traditional familiar analogy of Chora as mother or nurse (choreographer) giving birth to her child (choreographic work), to considering the process of invention and each emergent work as a third gender/genus, a place apart which keeps a 'dissymmetrical relation' with all that 'is in herself beside or in addition to herself, seems to couple with her' (Derrida 1987, cited in Ulmer 1994, p.65).

Chora is, I imagine, a space of love. Love, expressed in and through space; a space of being *present with* the emergence of a new work; an asymmetrical space of

openness and discernment; a relational space where, as Cixous puts it, in the 'interaction between the subjective and objective of two worlds, a third arises of which the expanse is generated thanks to the withdrawal imposed by difference'. This space would be a sacred space, where the qualifier 'sacred' is understood to mean, in Cixous' terms, 'the celebration of a mystery and the mystery of the emergence of meaning' (Cixous 2001, p.13).

I know that to enter this space or receptacle (which receives), and to let this space enter me in the process of invention, I have to be prepared to relinquish, to 'let go', when necessary, the control that comes with disciplinary-knowing and 'expert, arts-disciplinary mastery'. It is only in letting go that I can become receptive to what I, after Melrose (2003), describe as experiences of 'disciplinary-specific, expert-intuitive un-knowing'. This way of letting go and inviting choreographic intuitions to emerge is both productive towards the invention of new work and reactive towards suspending already acquired and habitual patterns of responses and conventions of expressivity that may be inhibiting the 'recognition' of emerging possibilities.

> A real, robust future, one that brings about something truly different, depends precisely on not-knowing or being able to predict that it was coming (Caputo 2000 p.6).

Every time I begin a new process of invention I prepare my 'self' to enter and be entered by this space using methods that support me in 'letting go'. I prepare myself to set the environment for a highly planned kind of spontaneity by choosing methods that provide me with skills to be unprepared, in which terms I intend to be open, receptive and responsive to not-knowing in the process of invention.

> The intention: to invent nothing -- no idea, no composition, no form -- and to receive everything: composition, object, form, idea, picture (G. Richter, 1986).

However, I also know that some of those methods and inquiry that support me to be unprepared, may also subtly bind me. They too may have to be 'let go' from time to

time. Letting go of method feels like falling, sometimes, and wanting to fall further, but stopping my self. Exciting and frightening at the same time.

> You stand at the tip of the high board. High above the sea. In it your father's upturned face. He calls to you to jump. He calls be a brave boy (Beckett, 1980)[110].

Time and time again in every process of invention, I step to the edge as I open the door of the dance studio and face my resistance and my desire, both rising simultaneously, to 'jump' without knowing what might be revealed, what I might find, on landing.

'Every beginning is a deep end……' (Nunan interviewed by Theodores 2003, p.198)

I know that every beginning is a deep end……so I now just have to jump.

> *And so I open the door of the studio and enter the space. Today I begin by walking. Feeling sensation of my foot surface touching the ground. Soft sensation in the ankle joint, yielding into the floor surface pushing into the space…..* (Journal extract 2006)

Figure 60

“Return Journey” (2008)
Dancer: Mary Wycherely
Choreography: Mary Nunan

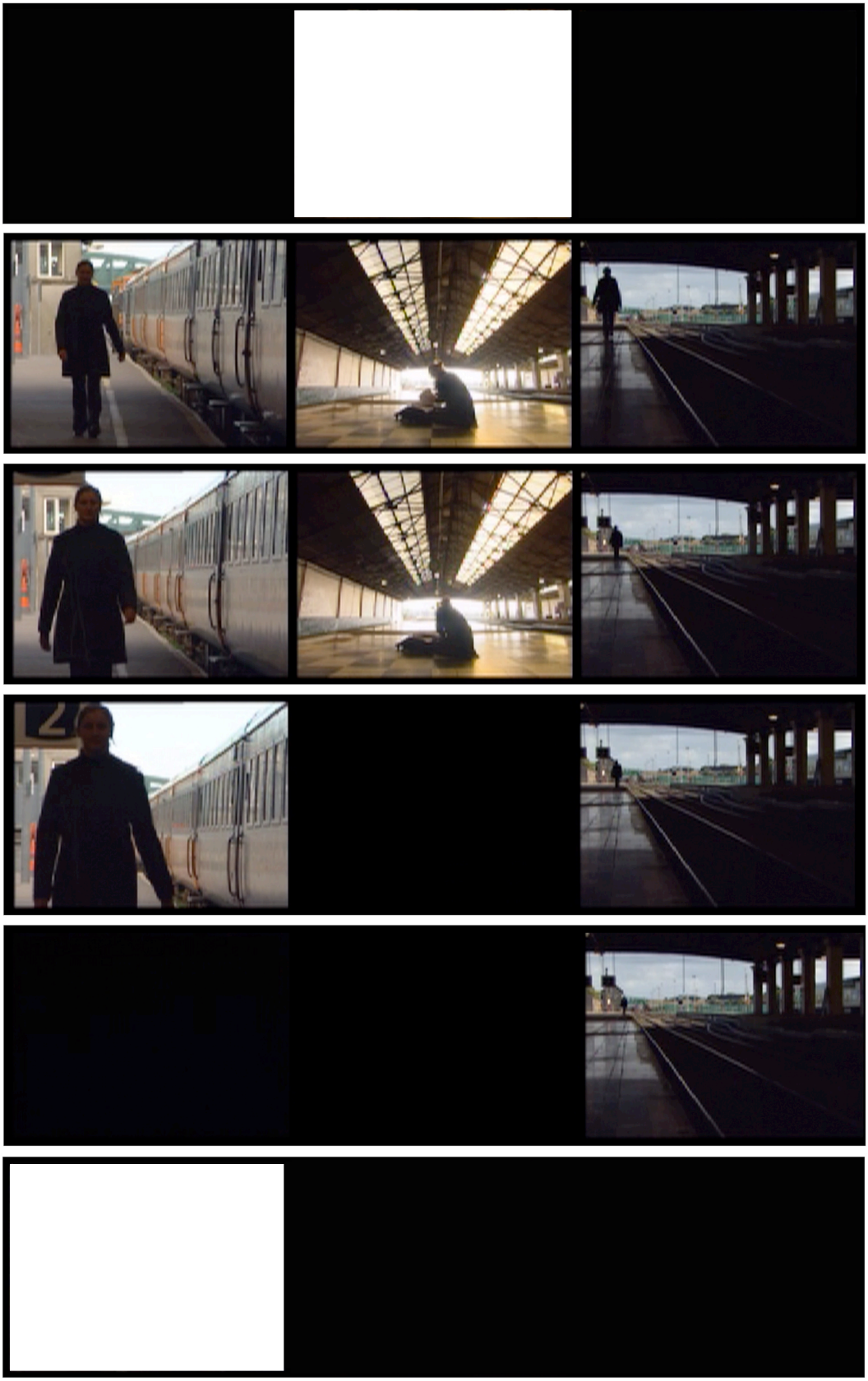

Figure 57

"Return Journey" (2008)
Sequence of screen grabs from video

Strand 4

> To make a dance or performance you have to deal with the reality of a dance or performance not with the reality of an idea. That doesn't mean that ideas aren't good: ideas are good, so long as we know they're ideas, and don't fool ourselves into thinking they are the finished piece (Burrows 2010, p.31).

In this Strand I circle back to examine and reflect on the very early stages of the process of inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH', to that point in time before the impulses that led to the emergence of these works were even ideas. However, because this circle also brings me closer to some of the deeper and more intimate layers of these works (many of which are not visible and/or immediately obvious on their surfaces), its pathway might be better described as spirallic.

The idea for 'Audience (1) Waltzers' did not drop out of the sky but was fuelled by my resistance to what I sensed as the limitations of some choreographic conventions (many of which I had been using to frame my past works) and my desire to push against them in creating this new work. My expertise and ability to produce new work therefore, plainly, accumulates from work already-made and that background thickens the ways I engage with present and future choices. It also involves proofs of work already made available to others – hence present choices are relationally-inflected, as well as informed by an ongoing 'feedback loop'.

Burning Resistances

> *A burning resistance to choreographing a work to be performed on a stage in front of audiences sitting in a row and in rows of rows, all facing in the same direction, a burning resistance to the structures of power for which the staging of dance in this way provides, a burning resistance to how putting dance on a stage*

> *frames it and lends to its 'objectification', a burning resistance to comparisons to narrative drama that come with being on a stage, a burning resistance to the ghosts of linear narrative lingering in theatres, under the seats, in the aisles, the wings, the air, haunting the stage and the staged body of the performer, a burning resistance to how the fourth wall can distance the choreography reducing it to a primarily visual experience for an audience whilst at the same time flattening its perspective….* (Mary Nunan Journal Extract 2003)

At the very early stages of the process of inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers' these resistances, as described above, were very intense and the emotions/ sensations/questions embedded in them were completely entangled around one another. It was difficult to get a sense of where they were really coming from and where they might lead. This meant that before the 'idea' for the choreography emerged I needed to draw on some of the modes and methods of inquiry underlying my practice (in particular the practice of witnessing and mindfulness meditation) to support me in staying *present with* sensations/emotions. These methods and modes of inquiry together with my sensibility as an artist (the latter which is formed and informed by my relationship with my past choreographic works[111], with my collaborators, with the canon of contemporary dance performance and with artists and scholars from the field of dance and also from other disciplinary practices) formed a creative 'choric' space (a space of receptivity and a receptacle) within which these restless impulses could be contained. Eventually, as a result of pushing against, and being pushed by the layered and overlapping boundaries of this space the resistances became somewhat mollified. As they did they started to untwist and become a little less entangled and this, in turn, allowed me to get a glimpse of their desire surfaces/sides.

Burning Desires

> *A burning desire to move the dancer and the dance away from the black box, the stage, the audience sitting in a row, row after row, a burning desire to decentralize the performance event through taking it off the stage, a burning desire to remove the dancer's*

body from the centre of the performing space, to provide for new possibilities in the relationship between performer and audience to emerge, a burning desire to provide for awareness of touch, to be brought more fully into the choreographic structure, a burning desire not to offer any predetermined meaning message or story to the audience but for meaning to surface, emerge, through the awareness of sensations and the circulation of this awareness between audience and performer, a burning desire to provide space and time for individual audience members to witness their own sensations as they unfold and to 'discover' that the meanings, the narratives, that arise out of these experiences as they unfold, are the essence and the content of the dance event, nothing more, nothing less… (Mary Nunan Journal Extract 2003)

Over a period of time some of the scattered fragments and broken threads of the emotions that were entangled within the above resistances and desires began to fall away leaving others to coalesce into a question: could I invent a choreography that might heighten the possibility for members of the audience to experience this dance, and the space within which it unfolds, in the first instance, somatically rather than through the sense of sight, through primarily seeing - or in academic terms, 'reading' - the movement of the dancer and its relationship with the choreographer's way of seeing, doing and knowing?

I was aware that the aspiration to provide for audiences to have a heightened somatic experience of this dance was ambitious and at the early stages of the process of inventing this work I had no idea how I might explore this idea choreographically. However, I was very clear that I wanted to begin by considering the use of space and specifically how the relationship between the audience and the choreography/performer(s) might be configured in the reality of the performing space. Prior to inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers' I had always conceived and constructed my choreographic works within the spatial frame of a proscenium arch. This is a configuration whereby the relationship between choreography and the audience is to a large degree determined by the placement of the latter in an auditorium, facing the performing space, the stage: the set-up is plainly highly

conventional, inviting and promoting a particular sort of visual engagement by onlookers. In 'Audience (1) Waltzers' by way of contrast, the audience occupies the centre of the performing space and the dancer moves on the periphery. In this configuration both the performer and the audience are de-centered (figs. 50-57).

The idea to configure the space in this way (when it eventually emerged) informed all the other decisions that I then made about the emerging work including, of course, the movement material/content. The revolving movement of the performer on the periphery of the space, together with the placement of the audience in the centre of the space (each facing a different direction) are all designed to offer each person a unique perspective on, and experience of, the overall choreographic structure (including the space within which it unfolds, the movements of the dancer and the other members of the audience). The sense/sensation of touch is an important element of this work; the movement content of the choreography comprises a series of carefully considered gestures that I, the dancer, perform as I lean into and push against the surfaces of the walls whilst circling the space, at the centre of which the audience sits. My intention, in accentuating the sensation of touch is, in part, to get under the skin of the movement so that its impulses/sensations (rather than its shape) might be felt as the fulcrum (in the exchange between the audience and the dancer) of this choreography.

All further decisions about the configuration of the space and the movement material for the dance were progressively modulated through the complex relational circumstances that surround, and indeed permeate, what Melrose (2003)[112] calls 'the fleeting knowledge practices of intuition and performance conceptualization and the macro-and micro-logics of performance production.' This mode of production requires questions of judgment, which we might begin to characterize as complex: ethical and aesthetic, judgments of value but also of taste, judgments relating to 'a sense of integrity, tact, daring, truthfulness, authenticity, but also to the extent to which the new material produced might *work*, in my own terms and also those, often different, of one or another audience member.

However, in addition to considering how any one piece might work on my terms and those of the audience, I also have to find out how it might work on its own terms, by which I mean on the terms of its materials. This means ensuring that the relationship between my ideas and the materials of the choreography (which gets played out in the space between both in every process of invention) is such that one doesn't overshadow the other. In my experience this space can be very charged; a troubled space, a battleground in which my invisible ideas come head to head with what I know or indeed imagine as the possibilities and/or limitations of the materials with which I am working. I experience the same process when I am writing.

When I look back at the process of inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' I can see how they were each very much driven, at least in the very early stages, by my desire to explore some distinct and distinctive (albeit also emergent) ideas. In each instance I considered the initial ideas to be *my* ideas and I wanted to mine their depths, which I considered to be *my* depths. Because of my desire to realize these ideas in the work I often found myself wanting to control the latter, to make it bend to these ideas even if this meant, at times, trying to force it to go in a particular direction. Inevitably, however, in each instance the work pushed back and made me realize that in pursuing *my* specific lines of inquiry I had to be careful not simply impose my ideas on the materials, nor subject the emerging choreographic 'object' to my will, but be prepared to also remain open and responsive to what the work itself was telling me as it unfolded. Each emerging work holds its own secrets. They are most usually held, in my experience, in the space between ideas and the materials. And I have increasingly come to recognize that one of my primary functions, as an artist, is to refine the skill and sensitivity necessary to feel them - find them.

I can still feel/see, in the finished work 'Audience (1) Waltzers', some traces of my initial desire/idea to provide for members of the audience to have a heightened somatic experience of this dance, and the space within which it unfolds. However, I can also feel that these ideas are now appropriately light, by which I mean they are not really visible. They do not burden the work. This is important, as ultimately the

latter has to work on its own terms, which on the balance I feel 'Audience (1) Waltzers' does, rather on the terms of the initial idea.

I extend my examination and reflection on how the relationship between my original ideas and the choreographic materials manifested in this finished choreographic work by drawing on the writing of Noh actor, playwright and author Zeami[113]. The distinction he makes between the matter of essence and function in Noh is helpful in illuminating what I consider to be the distinction between ideas and choreographic materials.

> You should know the matter of essence and function in Noh. Essence is like the flower, while function is the fragrance (Zeami 1418, cited in Scott Wilson, p.17).

Zeami uses the image of the flower blossoming in nature as a metaphor for the Flower in all things. However, he also points out that whilst the essence to which he refers is *like* the flower, it is not the Flower.

> If it is hidden it is the Flower; if it is not hidden, it is not the Flower (Zeami 1418, cited in Scott Wilson 2006, p.17)

When 'Audience (1) Waltzers' flowered fully (which really only happened when it was performed for a live audience) it began to release, as a scent, some sensations/questions of its own, many of which I found to be more mysterious and intriguing than the one I had set out to ask. It asked me, whether, in this work I was also beginning to challenge/push against the notion of the dancer being the primary channel through which the Dance is expressed; I smelt it whisper that its Dance is perhaps not only to be found in the movement of the dancer, but is revolving on an intimate/energetic level somewhere in the space, a third space, in and around and through both. Waltzing me gently it asked, after W.B. Yeats (1926), not 'how can we know the dancer from the dance' but rather, how can we know the audience from the dancer and the dance?

Questions about relationship between audience and performer were also central to the process of inventing 'Return Journey'. In this work I set out to explore if, and how, this relationship might be pushed beyond the identificatory one that is, I argue, foundational to most linear 'narratives' performed in traditional theatre/dance settings. As an artist I find stories obstructive; my interest in dance lies in its capacity to go beyond narrative – while I recognize, at the same time, that this 'beyond' is still situated, in my words at least, not too far from narrativity itself. Narrative, here, may signal both an expectation and a boundary at which, for a dancer and for an audience member, some sort of closure intervenes; whereas my use of 'beyond' signals that closure has 'not yet intervened'/may not intervene. Yet, it may also be true that

> [w]e would rather tell stories than actually experience openness, because stories are very vivid and enjoyable (Chogyam Trungpa 1987, p.67).

I am aware that the Dance that I want to invite into 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH', can, at times, feel 'too abstract for sensory representation' (Butcher and Melrose, eds. 2005, p.184),[114] because it operates below the level of 'sign', below the level of narrative characterisation and below the level of visual representation. However, I also know that each choreography has to operate above, as well as below the material plane of the dance: above, because it transcends the material plane, but equally organizes it in terms of the discipline, dance, below, because it serves to provide a structure for the dance within which personalized creative and expert-intuitive decisions emerge.

There are some similarities in the choreographic/performance structure of 'Audience (1) Waltzers' and 'Return Journey' perhaps most notably in the decision, in both, to place the moving dancers on the periphery and invite the audience to occupy the centre of the space. In the latter durational piece there are always two dancers/performers walking on the periphery of the space repeatedly putting on and taking off their coats, the choreographic intention being to evoke, through this movement, a sense of both constant repetition and constant change. In deciding to keep the movement material very simple and very repetitive my aim is to make the

dancers 'as ignorable as they are interesting' (Eno, cited in Toops 1995, p.9)[115] so that they might become an actional 'presence' in the space, rather than the holders of the dance. In this way the work goes a little further than 'Audience (1) Waltzers' in challenging some aspects of the medium of dance and its aesthetic modes of representation. The simple repetitive pedestrian task of putting on and taking off a coat and the walking pattern are intended, in part, to deflect any expectation of a single narrative/point; to bore (even at the risk of being boring) through layers of stories so as to invite a revolt/return to an awareness, albeit perhaps on a very subtle level, of sensation without any necessary association with emotion. My intention to provide for narratives to be dissolved is highlighted in the programme note for 'Return Journey' below:

> Limerick, Limerick Junction, Ballybrophy, Thurles, Portlaoise, Portarlington, Newbridge, Sallins, Heuston Station, Dublin. Return.
>
> Taking Colbert train station in Limerick as its starting point, literally, the piece revolves around themes of constant departure and constant return. All the elements of the performance contain ghosts of narratives, real and imagined which suggest a sense of longing, but more than that they strip away, through repetition, the stories driving the longing. The live performance amplifies, through repetition of simple functional gestures, not so much the futility, but to the fact, of daily repetitive patterns, and brings attention to their nuanced rhythms, their articulation in the body and in their expression space (Nunan, Programme Note 2008).

As the choreographer I am somewhat disappointed with the content and structure of 'Return Journey' (as discussed pp. 89-91). I feel that the relationship between the ideas and the choreographic materials, essence and function, is a little 'off'; they just did not sit so well together. However, despite the fact that 'Return Journey' did not, in my view, work entirely the process of performing it provided me with the opportunity to witness, on one occasion, what I can only describe, after Zeami (1418), as the 'Flower'/the Dance circulating in the space between the audience and I/the dancer. The following journal extract gives an account of this experience.

Today I spent a total of 6 hours in the space walking and repeatedly taking off, and putting on, my coat. At some times during the 'performance' there were no members of the public in the space, but I, and the other dancer, always continued to perform' the action of taking off and putting on our coats irrespective of whether we had an audience or not. Once again today I found it interesting to observe how my attention and intention changed when members of public entered the space. It was easy to monitor these changes because of the repetitive nature of the task that I was performing. It was also easy to sense, at anyone time, whether the audience were engaged , or not, by the work. And what's more I could also really feel the impact of their engagement/non-engagement on my performance'. When people were not engaged there was little I could do as a performer (it's hard to make the task of putting on and taking off a coat more, or less, interesting!). So in those instances I noticed I just continued doing the task, even though I could sometimes feel a part of me withdrawing a little, so the movement felt a little flat: perfunctory. Then at a certain stage of the afternoon one member of the public came and sat for a long time in the space. I could sense his engagement with the work. Then a strange thing happened. I noticed that I was becoming more and more aware of the details of the movement material. It was as though they were revealing themselves to me - that I was not so much doing as finding the movement. It was as though my field of consciousness had really expanded and I watched with delight as the movements 'danced' me. It seemed to me that the circulation of experiences of being 'present with' between that person (it happened to be a man but I think it could just have easily been a woman) and I, created a third space in which the 'dance' came to life.

Prior to this experience, it had been my understanding that whilst we each, inevitably, have a unique perception of any one

> *'object' the 'object' itself nonetheless remains the same. But this experience taught me that the 'force' of someone's (or two people's) presence/perception can in fact make an 'object', in this instance the movements of a dance, appear. And I wonder is this what Derrida means when he writes about 'Chora' as it manifests in the relationship between Plato and Socrates? Might it be that 'I' the dancer in that moment received the dance of him before whom I effaced myself (who in turn received the dance from me) because it was she/he who made the dance emerge like that* ('Return Journey' Journal Extract, 2008).

I will carry this very fleeting and not entirely fathomable experience into my next process of invention and am already curious as to what choreographic ideas will emerge when I begin to work with it in the studio. I also want to continue to examine and reflect on this experience through writing and so I begin by lightly wrapping the words 'somatically-revolving-empathy' around it: they may eventually fall away.

As part of my preliminary investigations I consider if, and how, my experience of 'somatically-revolving-empathy' might relate to the notion of 'kinaesthetic empathy', the latter which is currently generating much interdisciplinary research and debate across the fields of dance, philosophy and science (Calvo-Merino et al 2005; Stevens et al 2010; Hagendoorn 2004; Pakes 2006; Foster-Leigh 2010). Much of the scientific research, to date, into the notion of 'kinaesthetic empathy' is based on observing Mirror Neuron (MNS) activity in areas of the brain[116]. I find and investigation carried out by Clavo-Merino, Glaser, Grezes, Passingham and Haggard (2005) to be of particular interest, not least because it centers on professional dance practitioners and watchers/audience. [117] As part of this research undertaking the brains of a group of leading dancers with the Royal Ballet and a group of Capoeira performers were scanned for Mirror Neuron (MNS) activity in a fMRI while they watched a series of ballet and Capoeira movements. As one of the research outcomes it was found that there was more activity in these mirror system areas when the expert dancers watched their own kind of dance, the movements of which they were able to do - which they had the motor programmes for - compared to when they

watched the other kind of dance, which was physically roughly similar, but which they had never been trained in and didn't actually have the motor programmes to do. One of the conclusions that Calvo-Merino et al (2005) drew from their research was that the mirror systems seem to understand the movements of others by referring them to its own motor vocabulary or the repertoire of movements that the individual can make.

The research outcome, as described above, undoubtedly provides valuable information into brain function (and its potential application towards the enhancement of skills learning and motor rehabilitation) however, it begs the question for many dance scholars as to whether our experience of dance can be reducible to this neural event (Pakes 2006; Foster Leigh 2010)[118]. Pushing against this question I find myself asking, as part of this research undertaking, whether dance is reducible to movement. My sense, after Zeami (1418) is that whilst movement is *like* the flower/the dance, it is not the Flower/the Dance.

If I were to spatially describe the research that Calvo-Merino et al (2005) carried out into the connection between viewer and dancer I would say that it unfolded across a straight line: subject to object. The pathway of my research is more circular that this not least because it revolves around questions about choreography and dance at the same time as it revolves around questions about the connection between audience and dancer/Dance in performance. My investigations do not begin by defining dance as that which manifests in prescribed and codified movements, not least because my research interests lie in trying to find *it*, whatever *it* is, by pushing against the conventions underlying contemporary dance, choreography and performance.

As part of my research I was interested in exploring, in 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' if, by downplaying the primarily-front-facing visual reading of the movement, the choreographic structure might provide for the dance/Dance, be experienced somatically/kinaesthetically by both performers and audience (while bearing in mind the differences of experience of trained and expert performers, in contrast with those specific to non-dance-trained audience members). The decision to place the dancer(s) on the periphery of the space, constantly moving into and/or

out of the audience's line of vision, was intended to provide for the latter to sense/feel the dance/Dance as it revolved around them. In this configuration the audiences can chose not to follow the movement with their gaze but to watch it/see it, instead, only at those times when it passes in front of them.

> Thus, in watching Noh, those who know watch with their minds, while those who don't know watch with their eyes. What is seen with the mind is essence; what is seen with the eyes is function (Zeami 1418, cited in Scott Wilson 2006, p 17).

In reflecting on Zeami's use of the term mind in this context I return to the distinction made in Buddhism, between the 'knowing mind' (awareness) and the 'thinking mind' (mental events) (Rosch 1997; Varela et al 1997; Wallace 1998; Sogyal Rinpoche 1992; Ray 2001)). My interest in investigating how I might provide for audiences to 'watch with their minds' (Zeami1418) stems, in part, from my study and practice of Mindfulness Meditation, which posits that a non-dual basis for both experience and reality. According to Dzogchen[119] the non-dualist state is said to be not immanent and not transcendent, not neither, nor both. I imagine this non-dual space as also resonant with Deleuze's articulation of the concept of pure immanence.[120]

Possible resonances between Deleuze's account of pure immanence and the Dzogchen account of the non-dualist state are emerging now, retrospectively, as I examine and reflect on these choreographic works in this text-based strand. In my studio-based process of inventing each of these works I did not set out to directly interrogate these concepts but I welcome the opportunity that writing gives me to retrospectively consider them. Writing claps its hands with joy. It likes these thoughts, it would like me to swing with them, have them twirl me further in ever widening circles. But I have to stay writing's impulses, for now, we have for the moment gone far enough.

The choreographies 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH', emerged from my investigations into the question as to if, and how, I might provide for audiences to have an intimate/somatic experience of dance and the space within

which it unfolds in performance: it was never intended that these choreographies would provide an answer to this question, at least not directly: in words.

> Only after the dancers had left the floor did I notice the circular patterns of black scuffs and streaks their heels had made on the polished floor. This pattern, I recognized, was an enormous encoded page of poetry, a kind of manuscript, or, more properly a *pediscript* (Donaghy 2009, p.4).

The pediscripts for 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH', which were decipherable as circular patterns left on the periphery of the spaces in which they were performed, are evoked here again through these words pressed centre page/stage, as I consider the multiple findings to emerge from this mixed-mode research undertaking.

These findings have provided for many new layers of my questions about performer/audience relationships, including the finding/experience of 'somatically-revolving-empathy' to be revealed as relevant to my on-going epistemic inquiry into dance, choreography and performance. And they have also delivered me a new question which asks, after Calvo-Merion et al (2005), not what do we feel when we watch dance but what do we watch when we feel the Dance? What do we see when we feel the dance?

What do we see when we feel the Dance?

The process of inventing and performing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' provided for the above question to be become revealed. This is not to suggest that it was not already there as sensation/question at the beginning of this research process. My sense is that it was, beckoning always: but worded now, it has become more affirmed and affirming. And so I will push on with and through these three finished, and at the same time incomplete, choreographic/epistemic 'objects' (Knorr Cetina 2001), these punctuations in the flow of my overall practice, in my desire to further explore this question in future processes of invention.

Push, wush on, against the floor, against the page, making marks, push, wush on, and though these marks, feeling in the spaces between them, sensations, waves of sensations. Strong in my commitment to begin again and again, endlessly, to whirl into stillness …still …. to remain *present with* the faint edges of sensations before, and/or indeed after, they become words or gestures, to weave, to cleave choreographic environments into which the Dance might enter, through a gesture, a word, or both: so that my choreographies too, like poetry, after Auden (1939)[121], might ***make*** 'nothing happen' in the relationship/encounter between audience and dancer(s) but become instead a 'way of happening', a place/space in which sensations of '*somatically-revolving-empathy'* might be experienced, crossing surfaces, turning, all together, as one, in that moment……

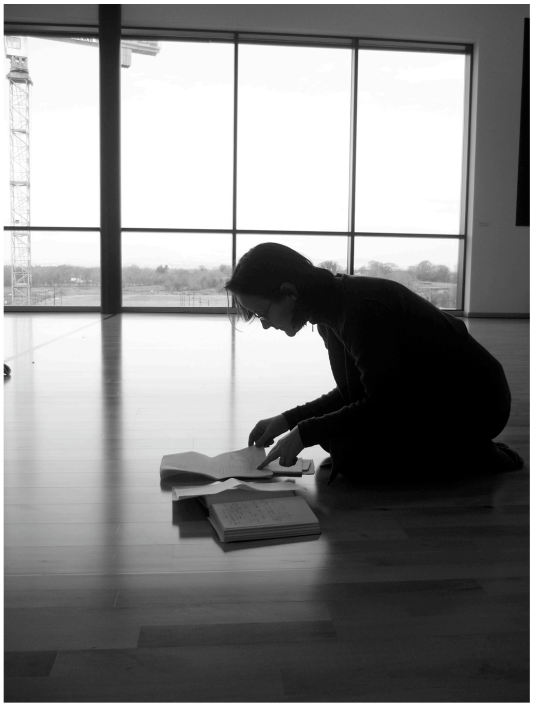

Figure 62

"Still Unfolding" (2011)
Photographer: Maeve Wallace

Conclusion

The mixed-mode heuristic frame that I developed as part of this research undertaking had a number of functions. Comprising two strands of inquiry, one of which was studio-based and the other text-based, it was designed to support me in rendering the process of inventing three original choreographic works, 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH', more transparent and self-reflexive, and in inquiring if, and how, writing might help me to do this. It should equally function, more generally, as a way of looking at and reflecting on a particular mode of choreographic practice *as a process of enquiry*, and on that basis, contribute to the development of further insights in the field.

As a major part of this research undertaking constituted an attempt to find a research model which could both accommodate and contain the methods and modes of inquiry of its text-based and studio-based strands, the question of the composition of the frame itself is not insignificant. If I were to describe its shape I would say that it is round, its boundaries porous and flexible. It might, as a result, be better described not as a frame, but as a space: a circular heuristic space.

Within this space, the studio-based strand of inquiry revolved around questions about dance, choreography and performance before emerging as the choreographies 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH'. The text-based strand (which comprises four chapters/Strands) revolved around questions as to whether, and how, writing could be integrated as one of the critical-meta-practices of my choreographic activities and, as such, support me in examining and reflecting on the operations of the decision-making processes that informed the invention of 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH'.

In first chapter/Strand the aim, to provide that both strands of the research could be integrated into the heuristic frame/space, as strands of equal epistemic weight (rather than separated out into the hierarchical relationship inherent in the categorization

'theory and practice') was discussed, as was the related and ultimately more challenging question, in this research context, of 'fit'. The design of the frame/space needed to be such that it could provide for the not-always-apparently compatible linear logic/critical analytical thinking, for which academic writing provides, to fit with/within the diagrammatic/schematic logic of the studio-based strand of inquiry.

The decision that the frame/space should provide for both strands to revolve around their distinct and only sometimes shared questions (the latter which were very much determined by the spinning of their respective wheels/modes of inquiry) whilst simultaneously providing for their respective circles of inquiry to overlap as appropriate, emerged as one of a number of solutions to the question of 'fit'. This became a defining characteristic of the heuristic frame and now stands as a model that other artists/researchers, who are interested in investigating aspects of their own epistemic processes of invention, may consider adopting and/or adapting in other research contexts.

The question of 'fit' surfaced again within the text-based strand as I sought to identify an approach to writing that might be appropriate for this specific research undertaking. To this end I proposed a short-term suspension of the knowledge producing paradigms and ideological biases that underpin already established logo-centric qualitative research methodologies in favour of a more open-ended investigative and reflective model. Within this model the apparatus of the alphabet was not limited to the production and propagation of analytico-referential discourse alone but included other genres and registers with the aim to provide for experimentation into the possibility of identifying modes of academic writing that might reach beyond those positioned on the side of the already-known.

As the rationale for adopting/adapting this approach to writing was being discussed in the first chapter/Strand of the research, the studio-based strand was starting to revolve around questions as to how I might invent, as well as account for, choreographic structures that might provide for somatic experiences of dance, and the space within which it unfolds, to be shared by the dancer(s) and audience in performance. This pattern, whereby multiple questions were being simultaneously

addressed in both strands of the enquiry was maintained throughout the research undertaking: it emerged as another one of the defining characteristics of the heuristic frame/space.

In the second chapter/Strand the focus of the writing turned towards my own choreographic/performance practice as I introduced the disciplines that have most strongly influenced its development to date: the Hawkins' contemporary dance technique, the Somatic practices of Body-Mind Centering and Authentic Movement and the Buddhist practice of Mindfulness Meditation. The ideological principles and the methods and modes of inquiry underlying each of the above practices were discussed, in some depth, to the end of making their role and function as elements within a critical-meta practice (many of which operate below the surface of the process of invention) more apparent and indeed transparent, to the reader. The notion of critical meta-practice was explored: i.e. it was approached as a complex practice that referenced and equally commented critically upon other complex practices. This also allowed me to reveal how specific critical meta-practices function as the fluid meta-processes in the constantly evolving schematics of my choreographic practice, the latter which resembles an autopoietic system: a living, open rather than closed system. It was this autopoietic link between the schemata of the practice and the operations of reflective judgment/decision-making that provided the conditions for the invention 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH'.

In this section I discussed the expressed aims of

> Hawkins' technique (to train dancers to be conscious of the sensation of movement, to be *present with* the movement they are doing), of Authentic Movement (whose practices are designed to support one in progressively developing the skills/techniques necessary to stay *'present with'*, to 'witness', the meanings, judgments and criticisms that one attaches to the sensations experienced in the moving body) and of Mindfulness Meditation (the aim of which is to enable one to be '*present with*' one's mind and body and energy in their ordinary states of occurrence).

I also discussed the ways in which methods and modes of inquiry appropriated from the above disciplinary practices support my status in remaining *'present with'* thoughts and emotions as they arise and inflect the operations of reflective judgment/decision-making in the process of invention. Identification of the capacity to remain *'present with'* movements, emotions/judgments, sensations and thoughts through the mastery of specific disciplinary practices emerged as being perhaps the most important thematic stand of this research.

I extended my investigation into this theme by borrowing selectively from published research in the fields of Philosophy, Science and Cognitive Science (which compares and contrasts the methods by which Western academic and Eastern contemplative traditions approach the phenomenon of mind). Much of this research highlights the distinction made in Mindfulness Meditation between 'knowing mind' (awareness) and 'thinking mind' (mental events) as being crucial to understanding the highly technical and definitively different contextual and connotative meanings linked to uses of the term 'mind' in both traditions. This broad view served to explicate why Buddhist philosophy privileges meditation as a method to support one in cultivating the 'knowing mind' and in developing a heightened awareness of the various ways in which the 'thinking mind' can get pulled away, whether by sense perceptions, feelings or other emotions, from being *present with* a simple task of attending to a specific 'object' of meditation - 'object' in my process of invention meaning the material and/or thematic content of each emerging choreographic work.

The cultivation of the 'knowing-mind'/awareness, engendered by the training and relaxing of attention on a given 'object' (whether that object is a sensation, a thought, a movement, a feeling or a word), informs every aspect of my approach to being and doing in my epistemic practice: this research asserts that knowledge produced by the operations of thought is different from that produced by the operations of awareness. Awareness does not always manifest as thinking: thinking is thought intensive, whilst awareness in this context implies the capacity to observe with, and process through, the senses.

However, writing and indeed thoughts themselves (and by extension the operations of critical analytical thinking and paradigmatic concepts/constructs for which they provide), were two of the 'objects' on which I focused my attention as part of this research undertaking. Writing and thinking were also regarded as one of the many layers and processes of 'knowing', with which I engaged in the process of inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH': they had an important role to play in illuminating some aspects of the 'forces' driving my studio-based research. However, the primary role and function of writing and thinking, in this context, was not to the end of determining/dictating the outcomes of my studio-based practice and/or summarizing them as though they were reducible to thoughts, but to provide for the multi-layered decision-making processes underlying it to be made more transparent.

With regard to the research outcomes it interestingly, and perhaps ironically, transpired that the diagrammatic and schematic reasoning underlying the studio-based practice became more immediately apparent in the content and structure of the writing than in the content and structure of three choreographic works. This unexpected research outcome emerged, in part, because the text-based strand required that the key themes/decision-making processes underlying the studio-based research be expanded and elaborated on from a number of disciplinary perspectives: the studio-based research processes required, on the other hand, these very themes to be distilled and compressed into compact choreographic structures.

As I indicated in the written inquiry, at various stages in the development of my choreographic practice, feelings and emotions also functioned as 'objects' of meditation to which I attended, in part, by writing, most usually in journals. Extracts from these journals, and other passages of writing in first person registers, were included in the text-based strand in order to ensure that their contribution to the process was not overlooked, and indeed erased, as might have happened if the focus of the research were only ideological interpretations as such interpretations tend to highlight general issues and eliminate the first person account of the practitioner.

The text-based strand is punctuated with numerous examples of this genre of writing: a journal extract (p.68) documents an experience of taking class with Eric Hawkins in New York in 1979. This experience still, importantly, tenderly held *in memories of that dance studio and the always bare-tassle-legged Hawkins' dancers long and lithe and far away from this foreign, to me but mine, Irish not-so-body-conscious at the time though wide eyed and open. Hours of study turned into years and decades and I am still inspired by Hawkins' revolution,* ... aimed to give a sense of a moment in time during a formative stage of my training as a dancer.

In chapter/Strand Two (pp.99-101) passages of writing, generated through the practice of 'witnessing' drawn from Authentic Movement, aimed to give an example of how this method supported me in attuning to sensations/feelings/emotions, as they arose in the process of invention, before letting them *fall onto the surprised page - faint impulses turning into words and images, most unexpected*. In this chapter/Strand I also gave an account of the ways in which this practice of 'witnessing', together with the other non-linguistic qualitative reasoning processes that underlie my studio-based practice, has informed the emergence of my choreographic and performance signature: the latter which I aimed to trace, in the text-based strand, in the context of the development of contemporary dance performance in Ireland since the 1980s, an oral history, of sorts.

Having identified the disciplines that have most strongly informed the development of my practice, to date, the focus turned, in the third chapter/Strand, to examine and reflect on how, in the process of inventing a choreographic work – or 'choreographic-theoretical model' - I have to be prepared to go beyond the respective methods and modes of inquiry of the former: beyond the issue not only of what, but how, I know. The process of inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' required, in each instance, that I find both the question/sensation driving the work and the method by which it could be made manifest: these works emerged because of my capacity to stay *present with* and find/follow sensations rather than specific methodological formula. Signaling the importance of this mode of knowledge to art-making I called these sensations 'red threads'.

In the third chapter/Strand experiences of disciplinary-knowing/not-knowing in the process of invention were reflected on, in part, by referring to journal extracts (my own and those of other art's practitioners), with the aim to reveal how one's patterns of habitual thoughts and emotions - fear of failure and hope for success - do not easily 'let go' (p.154). I discussed the 'I' that 'knows' and 'un-knows' as being constitutively complex and I examined and reflected on how it longs for, and at the same time resists, the risk of a temporary disappearance of identity that 'letting go' invites at certain stages throughout the process of inventions. Reflections on experiences of disciplinary knowing/not-knowing were further investigated in this chapter/Strand by being threaded through notions of creativity, courage and consciousness drawn from a number of disciplinary fields and perspectives. In addition, accounts of what has been described as a syncopal gap between 'knowing/not-knowing' (where thoughts momentarily die) were discussed.

I considered the 'gap' between 'knowing/not knowing' as a third space, imagined, with reference to the derridean tradition of a Choric space of openness and receptivity. The Choric space was also imagined as the realization of the spacious consciousness of Shunyathata which is, according to Buddhist tradition, empty of 'I' and empty of 'other': it is absolutely empty.

Referring specifically to the process of inventing 'Audience (1) Waltzers', I gave an account of how I spent many months attuning to some emerging professional-intuitive feelings/sensations/questions about audience(s), choreography, dance and performance - imagining, moving in the studio, drawing, writing - before the concept/frame and practico-theoretical choreographic structure for this work eventually began to emerge. Journal extracts included in the text-based strand (pp.132,133) aim to reveal aspects of this phase of the process. I discussed how (once the choreographic concept was clear) I then began to work on generating the movement material as part of the next phase of the process of invention. At that stage I didn't write so frequently in my journal. This is not to suggest that I didn't have any more important decisions to make. On the contrary, decisions about the movement material emerged through a process that required me to constantly

consider multiple, usually simultaneously occurring, options. However, I didn't feel a need to write about these decisions at this stage because I processing them directly through the medium of movement.

I also gave an account, in the third chapter/Strand, of why I decided that this piece should not be performed in a theatre/on a stage and of how this eventually led to the decision that the audience should, instead, be placed at the centre of the space and the dancer on the periphery, a configuration in which the dancer would not be visible all the time (see photographic images on pp.124-127). This play with visibility/invisibility was intended, in part, to 'interrupt' the audience's visual engagement with the work. My sense was that the audience's experience of the dance might be somatically enhanced if the dancer disappeared from view, from time to time, leaving sensations/traces to be evoked in her absence. The notion of the dancer not being visible all of the time also strongly informed the choreographic structure of 'HaH', the filmed adaptation of this work (see accompanying DVD).

The sense/sensation of touch was discussed as being an important element of both 'Audience (1) Waltzers' and 'HaH': my intention in using the walls, as surfaces against which the movement was pressed, was in part to accentuate the sense/sensation of touch and to get under the skin of the dance so that its impulses/sensations (rather than its shape) might be felt as the fulcrum (in the exchange between the audience and the dancer) of this choreography.

Meditations on my desire for 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' to provide for somatic experiences of dance, and the space within which it unfolds, to be shared by the dancer(s) and audience in performance were facilitated by research drawn from field of Practice Theory. To this end I focused specifically on those research undertakings that investigated the reflective and affective properties of research itself and the sense of longing at play in the relationship between researcher and research 'object'. This device of reflecting on some of the deep personal/professional desires that were constantly at play under the surface of the practice, by refracting them through other critical lenses (in addition to the ones through which they were already being processed in the studio) provided for the

former to be discussed, in a wider context, as a force in research-driven, creative and expert practices. In other words, my argument is that the apparently personal is of more general interest to other practitioner-researchers.

'Audience (1) Waltzers' was one of the 'objects' against which I pushed throughout the studio-based process of inventing 'Return Journey'. The filmed material for the latter was once again driven by my desire to play with space/perspective and with the sense/sensation of touch, as was the case with 'Audience (1) Waltzers'. However, the process of filming, in the train station, allowed these thematic strands to be differently framed/explored (see accompanying DVD 'Return Journey'/the film).

As part of the live performance of 'Return Journey' there was always two dancers/performers walking on the periphery of the space repeatedly putting on and taking off their coats, the choreographic intention being to evoke, through this movement, a sense of both constant repetition and constant change (See DVD 'Return Journey'/documentation of live performance). Repetition of the task of putting on and taking off a coat, together with the walking pattern was also intended to provide for the dancers to be experienced as an actional 'presence' in the space, rather than as performers of more-obviously-virtuosic and elaborated passages of movement. In this way the work goes a little further than 'Audience (1) Waltzers' in challenging some aspects of the medium of dance and its aesthetic modes of representation.

The use of repetition, in the live performance of 'Return Journey' is also intended to deflect any expectation of a single narrative/point; to bore (even at the risk of being boring) through layers of stories so as to invite a revolt/return to an awareness, albeit perhaps on a very subtle level, of sensation without any necessary association with a single linear narrative thread and/or emotion. My aim in this work (and indeed in 'Audience (1) Waltzers' and 'HaH') was to evoke rather than represent stories/emotions. In this regard these works set out to provide for sensations to be found/made present to the senses especially those that are not necessarily identifiable in terms of named and familiar emotions. The term 'affect', which refers to the

qualitative transformation of emotions into a single sensation, gives description to this intention.

As one of the thematic strands of the fourth and final chapter/Strand I discussed how the initial ideas for all three works at the centre of this research were progressively modulated through the macro and micro-logics of production. I also examined and reflected on how the decisions that I made in each process of invention were strongly informed by considerations as to how each emerging piece might work on my terms, on those of the audience and on its own terms - by which I mean the terms of the materials of the choreography.

Critiquing these now-completed choreographies, in this chapter/Strand, I reviewed, if and how, my initial desire/idea (to provide for members of the audience to have a heightened somatic experience of dance, and the space within which it unfolds) was realized in each of them. I concluded that this desire/idea was appropriately light in 'Audience (1) Waltzers' and 'HaH', by which I mean it did not burden the choreography. This was highlighted as being important not least because, ultimately, a choreography has to work on its own terms (which on the balance I feel 'Audience (1) Waltzers' and 'HaH' do), rather on the terms of an initial idea. On the other hand, I concluded that the relationship between the idea driving 'Return Journey' and the materials for the choreography was not entirely satisfactory. Some of what I perceived to be the reasons why this relationship did not entirely work were discussed in this chapter/Strand and also in the second chapter/Strand (pp.88-91).

Despite being of the view, as an artist/researcher, that 'Return Journey' did not entirely work, I gave an account, in this fourth chapter/Strand, of how the process of performing it, live, nonetheless provided me with the opportunity to continue my investigations into performer/audience relationships (as part of my broader research question as to if, and how, I might provide for somatic experiences of dance to be shared by both in performance). During this phase of the research, the rhythmical and spatial detail of the movement/choreography became the 'objects' of my attention and thus allowed my disciplinary-awareness (as a performer/choreographer) to simultaneously expand and attune to the relationship

with the audience. Such were the circumstances that provided me, on one occasion, with a clear sense (experienced as a sensation) of the energy/force of the Dance circulating between the dancer, the movements of the dance and the audience in performance. A journal extract (pp.169,170) gives an account of this experience /finding, aiming lightly to wrap the words 'somatically-revolving-empathy' around it.

The choreographies 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH', emerged from investigations (which were primarily conducted through movement/body/space/time and informed by the multiple relational considerations/decisions) into the question as to if, and how, I might provide for audiences to have an intimate/somatic experience of dance and the space within which it unfolds in performance. It was never intended that these choreographies would provide an answer to this question, at least not directly: in words. However, throughout the process of inventing and performing these works many new layers of this question, including the finding/experience of 'somatically-revolving-empathy' were revealed as relevant to my on-going epistemic inquiry into dance, choreography and performance. This, in turn, led to the emergence of a new research question: *What do I see when I feel the dance, what do you see when you feel the dance, what is seen when the dance is felt?*

As I approach the conclusion of this research undertaking I am signaling my desire to further explore, in future processes of invention, this finding/question (which I have posited as a somatization of the question - what do you feel when you see the dance? – that is driving much of the current research into the notion of kinaesthetic empathy) (pp.170,171). By highlighting this finding/question (in the context of the overall aim of this practice-based inquiry - to make the process of inventing original choreographic works more transparent) my intention is illustrate how finished choreographic works should provide, through the questions they generate for the artist/artistic community, for the continuation and concatenation of other such epistemic practices of choreography and performance.

And so as the research concludes I know that I have arrived not at a happy ending, but rather at a happy beginning, and better still both, together, momentarily poised.

As 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' fly out of sight, I feel/see them, after the poet Wallace Stevens[122], as marking the edge of just one of the many circles of an epistemic practice of choreography and performance viewed/reviewed, in this context, as advanced enquiry through practices into practice……

At this still point I am wait for some new circles/ideas to emerge. I know that are coming. They are turning as sensations yet to surface, after 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH', on the question : what do I see when I feel the dance, what do you see when you feel the dance, what is seen when the dance is felt?

[1] 'expert-disciplinary mastery' in Melrose 2003.

[2] Ulmer is Professor of English and Media Studies at the University of Florida.

[3] Theory 1592 from Gk. *theoria* 'contemplation, speculation, a looking at, things looked at'; from *theorein* 'to consider, speculate, look at'; from *theoros* 'spectator', from *thea* 'a view' + *horan* 'to see'. 'Sense of principles or methods of a science or art (rather than its practice)' is first recorded 1613. In 1638 the word theory is defined as 'an explanation based on observation and reasoning'. The verb *theorize* is recorded from 1638.

[4] According to Historian of Science Biagioli, history and philosophy represent themselves as disciplines dealing with products of minds rather than bodies. He argues that the link between the scientists' linguistic categories and the physical world, as established by operationally explicit 'correspondence rules', does not take into account how tacit bodily knowledge and skills inform the operations and outcomes of research in the laboratory.

[5] Melrose argues that within the academy philosophers practise a *writing* that is misunderstood as reified 'theory'. She suggests that in order to account for the theories produced in professional arts practice we should distinguish that of philosophers as being 'writerly'. In this way 'philosophers' can be identified as professional practitioners, writer-educators, whose mastery of certain complex disciplinary registers enable them to produce 'writerly' theories linked to certain modes of production (Melrose 2003, The Eventful Articulation of Singularities-or 'Chasing Angels').

[6] According to Pakes, many universities' acceptance of practice-based research, at higher degree level, turn on the idea of research as an original contribution to knowledge within a particular subject domain. She argues that the originality requirement is particularly controversial with an emerging academic discipline like dance, where 'the epistemological ground is still contested and shifting' (Pakes 2003, p.129). In this research undertaking I am using the term 'original' to describe the 'signature' choreographic works that emerge from my process of invention; I consider them, after Bohm (1980), as forms of insight, i.e. ways of looking at the dance, rather than epistemological assertions of what dance/choreography/performance 'is'.

[7] David Bohm (1917-94) was one of the foremost theoretical physicists of his generation and one of the most influential theorists of the emerging paradigm through which the world is increasingly viewed. He was regarded as a profoundly contemplative man, who developed imaginative research models in the languages of both physics and philosophy. His physics and cosmology were considered to be all-encompassing and so far ahead of his time that few people were able to appreciate them. Mainstream physicists considered them too mystical and few mystics could follow his subtle scientific reasoning (Krishnamurti was apparently a notable exception). http://twm.co.nz/Bohm.html

[8] Melrose uses this term, which she takes from J-F Lyotard, in the first instance with reference to, and to get some distance from, the notion of intertextuality; secondly to shift the focus to 'interpractice', and thirdly to highlight the notion of a logic of interpractice and of a systematic enquiry *into* practice *through* practices which is what I am setting out to accomplish here (Melrose 2011 e-mail correspondence).

[9] Etymologically the word heuristic derives from German *heuristisch,* from New Latin *heuristicus,* from Greek *heuriskein* to discover and is akin to Old Irish fo-*fúair* he found. It means involving or serving as an aid to learning, discovery or problem-solving by experimental and especially trial-and-error methods in creative human thinking, as in its computer simulations, of what is called 'heuristics'. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/heuristic. A large number of possibilities

may have to be examined, but the search is organized heuristically in such a way that the directions most likely to lead to success are explored first. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/264469/heuristic. The aim of the text-based strand of my research undertaking is to make more transparent the heuristic processes that contribute to the invention of original choreographic works in my practice.

[10] Post-structuralism includes various theoretical approaches, such as deconstruction, that criticize or go beyond structuralism's aspirations to create a rational science of culture by extrapolating the model of linguistics to other discursive and aesthetic formations. The theory of deconstruction, considered a notoriously difficult and widely influential method of inquiry, was developed by Jacques Derrida. Whilst Derrida himself stresses that deconstruction is not purely linguistic involving texts or books, it is nevertheless through text and books that his arguments are primarily progressed, critiqued, communicated and applied. It could be argued that the academy cannot fully accept and/or accommodate Derrida's argument that deconstruction is not purely linguistic otherwise why would it require artists undertaking practice-based research to provide a written commentary to explicate the deconstructive processes underpinning their studio-based practices? http://prelectur.stanford.edu/lecturers/derrida/

[11] http://www.sfmelrose.org.uk/

[12] My development as an artist has been greatly informed by concepts/ideas generated and articulated through reading, writing: words. However, prior to this research undertaking I had not 'formally' examined how writing might be further integrated into my overall practice to support me in illuminating specific aspects of my processes of invention.

[13] Many of these debates unfolded in a series of symposia and conferences facilitated by PARIP (Practice As Research In Performance). PARIP was a five -year project, directed by Professor Baz Kershaw and funded by the then AHRB (now Research Council). Its objectives were to investigate the creative-academic issues raised by practice-as-research where performance is defined, in keeping with AHRB and RAE documentation as performance media: theatre, dance, film, video and television. The aim of PARIP's investigations, carried out in collaboration with colleagues, educational institutions and professional bodies throughout the UK and Europe was to develop national guidelines for performance-as-research.

[14] Guidelines for Postgraduate Arts Research Programmes by Practice in Ireland were still, in 2009, in draft format. www.hetac.ie

[15] Other issues under discussion included live v. mediated performance, archiving and retrievability.

[16] http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Pages/default.aspx

[17] David Galin earned his medical degree in 1961 at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York. His current interests include religious experience from a neuropsychological perspective, theories of consciousness and the self, and rehabilitating the concept of spirit for the nonreligious and the scientifically minded.

[18] http://www.sfmelrose.org.uk/adjustyourset/

[19] The 'scriptural economy' is a term used by Michel de Certeau 1984 (cited in Melrose 2003) to account for the university and its role in the knowledge-economy. http://www.sfmelrose.org.uk/chasingangels/

[20] The concept of the ' apparatus' can be traced to film theory. Theorists of the apparatus examine the relationship between technology, ideology and institutional practice.

[21] Devised by Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) draws on his theories of *body*, *effort*, *shape and space* to analyse, describe and document human movement.

[22] Forsythe's CD-Rom '*William Forsythe: Improvisation Technologies: A Tool for the Analytical Dance Eye'* provides a good example of how new technologies have provided for LMA to be explored and applied in new ways.

[23] Publications edited by Carter (1998), Daly (1991), Dils and Albright (2001), Desmond (2003), Goellener and Shea Murphy (1995), Fraleigh and Hanstein (1999) and Lepecki (2004) are particularly valuable in providing both an overview of, and insights into, the range and depth of scholarly research that focuses on dance, the body, choreography and performance.

[24] The grounds for this assertion is for the most part based on anecdotal evidence as many artist/researchers did not focus, in their writing, on the issues underlying their concerns in this regard.

[25] I cite these artists because specific aspects of their respective practice/research resonate with aspects of my inquiry.

[26] Melrose argues that she uses the terms 'expert, arts- disciplinary mastery' and 'professional' for knowledge-political and historically specific reasons. Her concern is that in a number of major writers of Cultural and Performance Studies in the later 20th C. 'disciplinarity' tends to appear only to be rejected: and neither 'professional' nor 'expert' tend to figure in the index to their work. She argues a lack of 'empirical fit' between institutionally dominant academic discourses on performance on one hand and the arts-disciplinary or professional experience of performance-making – 'the expert-practitioner ethos, ethical engagement, sensing, intuitive play, drive and attitude, as well as evaluative apparatuses specific to professional performance' - on the other, in the context of practice-based higher degree research (Melrose 2003 p. 1&2 of 11). http://www.sfmelrose.org.uk/chasingangels/

[27] 'Mystory' is one of the many pedagogical methods that professor of English Gregory Ulmer has created to explore what he refers to as an 'anticipatory consciousness' and to utilize the force of intuition as a way to invent emergent forms of knowledge. He uses this method to invite his students to experiment in integrating personal (autobiography), popular (community stories, oral history or popular culture) and expert (disciplines of knowledge) in fulfilling specific assignments. In writing a 'mystory' students are required to bring into relation their experience with these three levels of discourse. He then asks them to use the *punctum,* the sting of memory, to locate items significant to them. The aim of the exercise is to support students to discover new points of entry into a specific problem (Ulmer 1989, p. 209).

[28] The use of the word 'perform' in this context may suggest a reference to performative writing and the field of Performance Studies. Were I to adopt such a stance, 'Audience (1) Waltzers', 'Return Journey' and 'HaH' would inevitably become 'objects' about which I would write performatively, However, it is my argument that these choreographies are in, and of themselves, theoretical practices which have the capacity to perform their own arguments. In addition, I am also setting out 'perform' the task of exploring how writing might illuminate aspects of my epistemic practice. And in this regard I am inspired by Peggy Phelan's account of performative writing as a 'live' process of discovery as this resonates strongly with how I experience the 'live' process of creating and performing choreographic works. According to Phelan, performative writing enacts the death of the 'we' that we think we are before we begin to write - 'A statement of allegiance to the radicality of unknowing who we are becoming, this writing pushes against the ideology of knowledge as a progressive movement forever approaching a completed end-point (Phelan 1997).'

[29] Evans (2007) cites Winnicott (1991) in his investigation into how students of the Performing Arts might be assisted in developing a richer engagement with journal writing as a method to achieve 'deep learning'. *Journal of writing in Creative Practice* 1:1 pp. 69-76. http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-journal,id=154/

[30] Coenesthesia (coen=common; esthesia=feeling) is a word coined by French psychiatrist Benoit to indicate the total inner perception we have of our organism. According to Benoit it is a kind of sixth

sense by means of which our organism perceives itself in its ensemble. It is a perception obtained by decontraction (Benoit 1984, cited in Hawkins 1992).

[31] Bainbridge-Cohen draws on the word 'somatization', first coined by Thomas Hanna, to give description to aim in Body Mind Centering to provide for the kinesthetic experience to be engaged directly. She contrasts this process with 'visualization' which is, according to her, is less direct in that it uses visual imagery to evoke a kinesthetic experience.

[32] It has also been informed by my study of Graham, Cunningham and Limon techniques, Contact Improvisation, Improvisation, Yoga, Ballet and Release-based techniques together with my study of Laban principles and other compositional tools including those studied in workshops directed by established choreographers including Steve Paxton, Lisa Nelson, Yvonne Rainer, Lucinda Childs, Jonathan Burrows, Susanna Linke, Peter Bonham.

[33] Peirce's account of the intuitive and semi-intuitive relations at play in schematic reasoning resonates with my experience of the processes (somatic, kinaesthetic, imaginative, visual) at play under the surface of the decisions I make in my studio-based practice. 'We form in the imagination some sort of diagrammatic that is an iconic representation of the facts, as skeletal as possible. The impression of the present writer is that with ordinary persons this is always a visual image or mixed visual and muscular; but this is an opinion not founded on any systematic examination (Peirce 1901, cited in Hankins and Silverman, 1995)'. According to Peirce when the diagram is then observed a hypothesis suggests itself. This is called diagrammatic, schematic reasoning (Peirce 1901, cited in Hankins and Silverman 1995). Although Peirce emphasized that the signs used in communication were not limited to language, during the 20th Century semiotics has grown into a major field of study that has primarily focused on linguistics, cultural anthropology and literature.

[34] Bricolage is a term used in several disciplines, among them the visual arts, to refer to the construction or creation of a work from a diverse range of things that happen to be available, or a work created by such a process. French anthropologist Levi-Straus, in his book the *Savage Mind*, uses this term to include spontaneous action and thought patterns including those generated by one's imagination (Levi-Strauss 1962).

[35] According to Banes the term 'postmodern' came into use in dance in the early 1960's when Yvonne Rainer and other emerging choreographers used it to differentiate their work from that of the preceding generation of modern dance artists. Banes argues that post-modernism was a relatively new term at that time which meant something different for each art form. She argues that the meaning of the term in dance now refers simultaneously to a historical movement in dance, the present moment in dance and a method of analyzing dance and is, therefore, partly historical and partly descriptive (Banes 1994).

[36] Bales compares pre-Judson dance technique classes as 'standing' classes, in which developing verticality is of the essence, with post-Judson 'upside-down' classes in which rolling, falling, taking weight on hands and other body parts are of the essence (Bales and Nettl-Fiol 2008).

[37] Joan Davis is widely recognised as a pioneering dance artist in Ireland, not least because of her role in founding Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre (DCDT). Prior to the establishment of DCDT, in 1979, there was no other professional contemporary dance company in Ireland since the demise of a performance company directed by Erina Brady, as part of her Irish School of Dance Art, in the 1940's. Irish born Davis was an adult in her 30's when she began her contemporary dance training. She took her first contemporary dance classes at the studio of Terez Nelson. Nelson had trained in Graham technique. She lived in Ireland in the mid 1970's and had a private dance studio in Monkstown, Co. Dublin. Later Davis would continue her dance studies in London at the London School of Contemporary Dance. She recounts this in an interview with Mulrooney: 'For about two years I rented studios here and there. I would go over every second week to London and do a day of classes, and then come back the next day and teach what I had learned in the classes (Mulrooney 2006 p.120)'.

[38] This is a reference to Csikszentmihalyi's account, in *Creativity - Flow and Psychology of Discovery and Invention*, of his systems model of creativity in. He argues that the creative domain, is nested in culture, the field, which includes all the gatekeepers of the domain (e.g. art critics, art teachers, curators of museums, etc.) and the individual person who, using the symbols of the given domain, has a new idea or sees a new pattern. He argues that we only recognize this person's creativity when this novelty is selected, by the gatekeepers, for inclusion into the relevant domain (Csikszentmihalyi 1997, p.27).

[39] I am using the term performative here to describe the choreographed movements that I perform in my intention to create an environment into which *'the dance'* can enter. My use of this term therefore differs from its use by Schechner (2002) and other Performance Studies' scholars to signal social/political norms or habits enacted in the daily behaviour (or performance) of individuals. In performing the movements of the choreography it is my intention to provide moments of co-experiencing as described by Powell and Shaffer, after Sontag, 'as moments when the performer and audience engage each other not just in terms of what the other means, but how they excite each other's senses (Sontag 1961 cited in Powell and Stephenson Shaffer, 2009 p. 13)'.

[40] Hawkins studied the principles of ideokinesis with its originator Mabel Ellsworth-Todd. Her work and that of her students Lulu Sweigard and Barbara Clarke continues to influence kinesiological applications in the field of dance training to this day. In the late 1970's I studied Todd's book the *Thinking Body* (1937) and Sweigard's book *Human Movement Potential* (1974) as part of my training as a dancer.

[41] The term 'release technique' used by dancers and choreographers defies a strict definition. Many trace its origins in dance to the Todd/Sweigard lineage and more recently to the integration of Somatic practices into dance training. The concept includes 'releasing' old habits, old styles, tension, and holding patterns. Bales (2006) posits that one of the central themes of 'release' revolves around the idea of movement efficiency, 'doing more with less, using momentum rather than force, along with Zen ideas of 'getting out of the way' and 'letting it happen' (Bales 2006 p.157).

[42] Rochlein (1964) uses the phrase 'Theatre of Perception' to characterize a human quality of dance that doesn't depend on emotionalism to evoke a response but strips movement of everything but its poetry to find the essence of expression (Rochlein 1964, cited in Hawkins 1992)

[43] Anna Kisselgoff, dance critic for the New York Times called Hawkins a 'maverick' of modern dance in an article she wrote for *Harvard* magazine in 1980. According to Celichowska (2000) this was a description that Hawkins relished in reference to his work.

[44] In the Buddhist tradition the practice of meditation is considered one of the processes that can support one in recognizing how attachment to emotions of hope and fear can inhibit one's ability to be *present with* one's mind and body in their ordinary state of occurrence. According to Buddhism all fear (and hope) arises from looking backward or forward. This is reflected in the words of nineteenth-century Tibetan master Patrul Rinpoche - 'don't prolong the past, don't invite the future, don't be deceived by appearances, just dwell in present' http://www.margaretwheatley.com/articles/BeyondHopeandFear.pdf.

[45] A Hawkins technique class begins with what is called 'floor work' then progress to series of 'centre floor' exercises allowing the dancer to 'warm up' their legs and feet and to balance the upper body over the legs. It usually finishes with movement 'combinations' which required one to travel across the space of the dance studio.

[46] For an ethnographer 'culture' refers to the knowledge members ('natives') of a given group are thought to more or less to share.

[47] This list includes Graham, Humphries, Limon and Cunningham techniques.

[48] According to Schatzki, Practice Theorists who highlight embodiment typically believe that bodies and activities are 'constituted' within practices. He cites Foucault in arguing that the constitution of present-day activity actually consists in fashioning of bodies (e.g., their aptitudes) within disciplinary practices (Foucault 1976, cited Schatzki 2001, p.138).

[49] International guest choreographers who created works for the Company between 1981-1986 included Sara and Jerry Pearson, Richard Haisma, Mark Taylor, Martha Bowers, Martha Renzi, Yoshiko Chuma. These choreographers were all based in the US, mainly in New York City, at that time.

[50] The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, was established in 1951. It is the Irish State's principal instrument of art's funding and an advisory body to Government on art's matters, operating under the Arts Acts of 1951, 1973, and 2003. Currently the Arts Council is a voluntary body of 12 members and a Chair, appointed, for a term of five years, by the Minister with responsibility for the Arts. The twelfth Arts Council, of which I was a member, was appointed in 2003. More details about the Arts Council can be found at its web address http://www.artscouncil.ie

[51] Thomond College of Education, Mary Immaculate College of Education and the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaion jointly funded the residency.

[52] http://www.daghdha.org/

[53] Between 1988 and 1999, the Company produced two performance programmes each year: an Education Programme which toured to schools throughout Ireland a Theatre Programme which toured to the theatre venues nationally and internationally.

[54] Japanese born Yoshiko Chuma (artistic director of The School of Hard Knocks, USA) has been living in New York City since 1978. Chuma has created more than 45 full-length company works, commissions and site-specific events for venues across the world, constantly challenging the notion of performance for both audience and performers. She is the recipient of several fellowships and awards, including those from the Guggenheim Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, Japan Foundation, Meet the Composer Choreographer/Composer Commission and Philip Morris New Works. She received a New York Dance & Performance Award ('Bessie') in 1984 and has led workshops and master classes throughout Eastern and Western Europe, Asia, Russia and the U.S. http://www.yoshikochuma.org/

[55] '2x2x5' (2001) created in collaboration with the Crash Ensemble (http://www.crashensemble.com/) 'Reverse Psychology, 10,000 Steps' (2002) and 'The Yellow Room (2003).

[56] This success was reflected, in part, by the steady growth of the company and by the increase, each year, in the revenue funding that it received from the Arts Council'. In 1988 Daghdha was awarded grant-aid of £6,000 and when I resigned as Artistic Director in 1999 the Company had been awarded a three year funding commitment of €1,000,000. In 2011 the Arts Council withdrew all its funding from the Company.

[57] Extemporary Dance Theatre (1975-1991) was formed by six dancers who trained at London Contemporary Dance School. It was a small scale touring contemporary dance company that presented work by modern dance choreographers of the day as well as nurturing new choreographic talent. It gradually became more experimental under the artistic directorship of Emilyn Claid. Among its dancers were Lloyd Newson, Nigel Charnock, Corrine Bougaard, Yolande Snaith, and Scott Ambler. The company's repertory included works by Steve Paxton, David Gordon, Michael Clark, Tom Jobe, Laurie Booth, and Karole Armitage.
http://www.surrey.ac.uk/library/nrcd/archives/collections/coarchives/extdancetheatre/

[58] www.marynunan.com

[59] http://www.gorsehill.net/mayalila.htm

[60] Davis uses the term 'scoreless' to distinguish this approach to improvisation from those that are based on 'scores'.

[61] Davis uses the word 'offering' in the place of performance to give description to Maya Lila events in which professional dancers 'offer' their 'scoreless' performances to audiences. http://www.abyss.ie/Videos/DanceHouse_1.mp4

[62] Melrose defines signature practices as: 'singular or self-defining; but at the same time an aspect of them recurs, across a body of work, and between that work and its contextualising framework/s; and they are repeatedly modulated within given disciplinary parameters' http://www.sfmelrose.org.uk/

[63] Massumi (2002) uses 'affect' in preference to 'emotion' to signal as-yet unnamed emotion.

[64] 'Force is closely related to sensation: for a sensation to exist a force must be exerted on a body, on a point of the wave. But if the force is the condition of sensation, it is nonetheless not the force that is sensed, since the sensation 'gives' something completely different from the forces that condition it (Deleuze 2003, p. 56)'.

[65] This is a reference to the concept of the Body without Organs (BwO), which is a key concept in the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari. They borrowed this term from Antonin Artaud's radio play *To Have Done with the Judgment of God* (1947): 'When you will have made him a body without organs, then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions and restored him to his true freedom'. Deleuze and Guattari's BwO functions as a recording site for the workings of the organs (desiring-machines) whose productive nature is always in battle with the anti-production of the BwO. According to Deleuze and Guattari, BwO refers to a process that dis-organ-izes the organs/affects in the body. Through this process the organs multiply connections with each other and with the organs of other bodies in ways that defies the systems that keeps them enslaved to the morality of representational and majoritarian behaviour (Deleuze and Guatarri 1987). In providing for the somatization of the relationship between 'internal' organs and external movement through space Body-Mind Centering also sets out to provide for transformative experiences and liberation from automatic reactions through heightened awareness of the sensation of inner cellular movement.

[66] Hartley identifies five diaphragms in the body: the respiratory, the pelvic, the thoracic, the vestibular folds of the vocal cords and the dura mater (a membranous sheath that envelops the brain). These diaphragms all lie parallel to each other in the horizontal plane of the body (Hartley 1995, pps 162-165).

[67] Mary Starks Whitehouse (1911-1979) is recognised as having created the US West Coast tradition of dance therapy sometimes called 'Moving in Depth'. Whitehouse's work came to be used by Jungians whilst in the East Coast Bartenieff's work became associated with psychoanalysis.

[68] Davis studied Authentic Movement with Adler, in Europe, from 1992-2001.

[69] See footnote 25.

[70] The motto guiding Gregory Ulmer's teaching and research is borrowed from the Japanese poet Basho, who advised 'not to follow in the footsteps of the masters, but to seek what they sought.' http://www.egs.edu/faculty/gregory-ulmer/biography/

[71] Both the words 'Zen' (Japanese) and 'Ch'an (Chinese) derive from the Sanskrit word Dhyana, meaning meditation. Zen was practiced in China in the 6th century CE. The Rinzai (Chinese, Lin-chi) sect of Zen was introduced to Japan by the Chinese priest Ensai in 1191. Rinzai Buddhism emphasizes the use of koans, paradoxical puzzles or questions that help the practitioner to overcome the normal boundaries of logic. Soto Buddhism (Chinese, Ts'ao-tung) is another Zen sect that was transmitted from China to Japan. It arrived in Japan in 1227 upon the teacher Dogen's return from China. Soto emphasizes zazen, or sitting meditation, as the means to attain enlightenment.

[72] http://www.openway.org.au/teacher_lifekoan.html

[73] http://www.aikido.ie/aikidostart.htm

[74] A sesshin (the word means literally, 'to unify the mind'), is an intensive meditation retreat. The sesshins led by Hogen Yamahatha included yoga, mantra running, swimming, zazen, walking meditation and dogsen, the latter which provided the opportunity for students to receive personal guidance in private interviews with the teacher. The sesshins I attended were residential and usually lasted for about a week or ten days.

[75] The knowledge transmitted by the masters of the Dzogchen teachings is considered to be neither of an intellectual nature nor conditioned by the principles of a religious or philosophical ideology. It concerns the reality of human experience in its immediacy (Namkai Norbu 1996). Although the Dzogchen is often translated as 'Great Perfection', Tibetan Dzogchen master Sogyal Rinpoche says he prefers to leave it untranslated because Great Perfection carries a sense of a perfection that we have to strive to attain, a goal that lies at the end of a long grueling journey. 'Nothing could be further from the true meaning of Dzogchen: the *already* self-perfected state of our primordial nature, which needs no 'perfecting' (Sogyal Rinpoche 1992)'.

[76] Tibetan Buddhism today is defined primarily by four schools; the Nyingma or 'Ancient School' and the Sakya, Kagyu and Kadam/Geluk schools.

[77] In his memoir '*Threads of Time'* Peter Brook reflects on his experiences of decision-making in rehearsal contexts. He recounts how he has come to realise that if he does not know what he wants at a particular moment in the process of directing a play that it its better for him to share his uncertainties with the actors rather than pretending that he knows. He feels that the process of working through uncertainties (despite how 'terrifying' this can be for him) provides time for 'distracting and irrelevant thought-waves to calm down, allowing coherent patterns to rise from a more buried level (Brook 1998, p.92)'.

[78] Hinyana, Mahayana and Vajrayana.

[79] In the Abhidharma teachings of the first turning of the wheel of dharma the impermanent nature of human experience is examined in detail.

[80] The word Shunya derives from, and is part of, the Buddhist concept of Shunyata. *Shunya* is usually translated as 'empty' and *ta* as 'ness. 'According to [Buddhist] tradition shunyatha is empty of 'I' and empty of 'other'; it is absolutely empty. This experience of emptiness is realising that 'there is no 'I' as actor, no action, and no 'other' to be acted upon' (Chogyam Trungpa 1991, p.135). Shunyatha is not the nihilistic idea of nothingness or voidness. It is the complete absence of grasping and fixation – the complete egolessness of subject and object. Understanding emptiness involves an appreciation of the mutual dependence of, or reflexive connections between, any phenomenon and its context and the ability to perceive 'true reality' or 'suchness' (tathata), in other words 'reality' just as it is without the duality imposed by conceptual categories. This level of awareness can, according to Buddhist philosophy, be arrived at through the practice of Shamatha and Vispashyana meditation.

[81] The point of meditation is to remain as long as possible in the sixth consciousness, in order to slow down the reaction of the seventh and in this way to be present with the experience as it arises, rather

than separating oneself from it by being distracted from it by mental commentary (Sleeger et al, 2007).

[82] In the age-old image of the ouroboros lies the thought of devouring oneself and turning oneself into a circulatory process. It also reflects the alchemist' belief that the prima material of art was man himself. In this context the concept serves as an analogy for circulatory/evolving schematics of the studio-based process of invention.

[83] In Philosophy, Systems Theory and the Cognitive Sciences emergence refers to the way complex systems and patterns arise out of multiplicity of relatively simple interactions. 'The passage from local rules to global coherence is the heart of what used to be called self-orgnisation … today people prefer to speak of emergent or global properties, network dynamics, nonlinear networks, complex systems or even synergies (Verela et al 1993, p.88).

[84] In his introduction to '*Navigating the Unknown, the creative process in contemporary performing arts'* Bannerman points to the assertion of many artists that they begin the process of creating a new work by initiating a search for an unknown 'emergent premise (Bannerman 2006, p.15)'.

[85] This is the title of an interview with Mary Nunan conducted by Diana Theodores in *'Dancing on the Edge of Europe: Irish Choreographers in Conversation'* (Theodores 2003, p.198).

[86] Extract from '*Holy Christometer'*, The Village Voice, December 19, 1968. Jill Johnson worked as a dance critic in New York in the 1960s. Her writing, much of which championed the Judson or post-modernist dance movement of the 1960s, began appearing in the Village Voice in 1959 and is regarded by many as functioning as an important testament to this tumultuous decade in dance history.

[87] By studying and practicing the Erick Hawkins technique one progresses, step-by-step, to a predetermined end and become a 'Hawkins dancer'. However, I decided not to go to this 'end' but to selectively draw from principles underpinning this technique in order to address my specific technical needs/questions as a dancer/ performer/ choreographer. The influence of Hawkins' technique on my practice is discussed in detail in the previous strand of this research.

[88] 'Authentic movement is a discipline in which the movement is not prescribed, instead it is discovered by the mover, as gestures, both cultural and idiosyncratic, emerge out of complex 'inner' experiences and find their way into consciousness and form (Adler 2002, p6).'

[89] The distinction between 'knowing mind' and 'thinking mind' which is crucial to understanding the highly technical, and often definitively different psychological, contextual and connotative meanings intended by the use of the term 'mind' in Buddhist philosophy and psychology and its use in Western philosophy, psychology and science is discussed in more detail in Strand 2.

[90] In meditation any object can used as an 'object'. In many instances it is a candle or the breath. What is important is not the 'object', per se, but the quality of one's attention.

[91] However, as Peter Brook is a highly prolific theatre director and an author we 'know' that in his creative-decision making he can draw on this expertise to support him to go beyond what he 'knows'.

[92] 'HaH' has recently been selected for showing in a number of galleries in Ireland; the stipulation is that it should be shown on a small television screen with headphones to be used for the sound

[93] See Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, trans W Pluhar and Gregor M., Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987.

[94] Philosopher John D.Caputo argues that as humans we are not vessels of a Divine or other omnipotent supernatural force. It is his hypothesis that 'we do not 'Know' ourselves or one another, that we do not 'Know' the world or God, in some Deep and Capitalized way that yields the capitalized Secret. That, if anything, is who we are, the ones who do not know who they are, and whose lives are impassioned by the passion of that non-knowing (Caputo 2000, P.5)'.

[95] According to Chandler (2006), closed textual structures can be seen as reflecting authorial attempts to create worlds whose completeness, order and clarity demand our recognition of them as somehow more absolute, more objective, more 'real', than the dynamic flux of everyday experience. Academic authors first fragment that which is experienced as seamless, and then, in conforming to various conventions in the use of the printed word, seek to give an impression of the seamlessness of their creations. http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem04.html

[96] In his paper entitled *'Semiotics for Beginners'* Chandler (2006) highlights the structure of 'classical' (realist) narrative events as those that always provide for continuity and closure. He contrasts this approach with film-maker Jean-Luc Godard's declaration that he liked a film to have a beginning, a middle and an end, but not necessarily in that order tp://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem04.html

[97] The irresistible force paradox, also the unstoppable force paradox, is a classic paradox formulated that asks what happens when an irresistible force meets an immovable object? This paradox is a form of the omnipotence paradox, but that paradox is most often discussed in the context of God's omnipotence. Can God create a stone so heavy it cannot be lifted, not even by God Himself?

[98] Yeats to Ezra Pound 15th July 1918, Yale, cited in R.F Foster 2003 in *W.B.Yeats: A Life: Arch Poet 1915-1939* Oxford University Press.

[99] According to Deleuze, Sylvester's hypothesis of ambivalence might misleadingly suggest that the figure in the painting is experiencing feelings in relation to a narrated story. Deleuze argues that there are no feelings in Bacon because Bacon is interested in moving beyond the figurative. Sensation is what is painted. (Deleuze 2003, p.35 English translation).

[100] Props, abbreviation of the word properties used to describe 'objects' that are used in performances.

[101] www.marynunan.com

[102] Knorr-Cetina draws from historian of biology Rheinberger a definition of 'epistemic things' as any scientific objects of investigation that are at the centre of a research process and in the process of being materially defined (Knorr Cetina 2001, p.181).

[103] From *Worstward Ho* (1984) by Samuel Beckett, New York: Grove.

[104] The violence of creativity is also highlighted by Deleuze, who opens the preface to his book on the artist Francis Bacon with the statement 'Francis Bacon's painting is of a very special violence (Deleuze 2003). According to Deleuze Bacon is interested in the violence that is involved only with colour and line; 'the violence of sensation (and not of representation) (Deleuze 2003, p.x).' Deleuze later points to what he perceives as a certain 'blurriness' in Bacon's work which he suggests Bacon achieves an operation that consists of 'clarity destroying clarity' (Deleuze 2003, p.6). Erick Hawkins response when asked what he considered most beautiful was 'dance that is violent clarity' (Hawkins 1962).

[105] The term syncope, which applies to symptoms as diverse as sneezing, laughing, asthma, epileptic seizure and the experience of orgasm, is investigated by Clement as meaning an eclipse, interval,

absence followed by a new departure. She argues that syncope does not mean an abdication of life and a commitment to passivity. Her treatise has a political thrust in that she uses it to challenge the Western philosophical practice of dividing subject and object which, she argues, eliminates, even in the slightest, a vanishment, a gap, a swoon of meaning.

[106] Somatic practitioner and psychotherapist Hartley argues that 'consciously directed movement needs to be balanced by surrender to unconscious process, to the flow of fluids within the body, and the free and spontaneous expression of the inner feeling self (Hartley 2004, p.55)'.

[107] According to Cornford one of the special contributions of Timeaus to Platonic philosophy was to add between being and becoming this third kind of nature, identified as 'space' or 'receptacle' (Cornford 1937, cited in Ulmer 1994).

[108] See footnote 78

[109] This level of awareness can, according to Buddhist philosophy, be arrived at through the practice of Shamatha and Vispashyana meditation.

[110] From the novel *Company* by Samuel Beckett (1980) London: Calder Publications Ltd.

[111] www.marynunan.com

[112] http://www.sfmelrose.u-net.com/adjustyourset/

[113] Zeami (1363-1443) was a Japanese actor and playwright and authored sixteen treatises outlining his theories for the art of Noh.

[114] In her investigation into this phenomenon Melrose draws from Paul de Man's account of hypotyposis as a figuration 'which makes present to the senses, something which is out of their reach, not because it does not happen to be there but because it consists, in whole or part, of elements too abstract for sensory representation (de Man 1979, cited Melrose 2005, P184).'

[115] This is a direct reference to a lecture by composer/musician Brian Eno on ambient music: 'Ambient Music must be able to accommodate many levels of listening attention without enforcing one in particular: it must be as ignorable as it is interesting (Eno cited Toops1995, p.9)'.

[116] In recent years much of the research in this area, in the UK, was carried out under the project 'Watching Dance: Kinaesthetic Empathy'. This was a multidisciplinary project that used audience research and neuroscience to explore how dance spectators respond to and identify with dance. It involved collaboration across four institutions (University of Manchester, University of Glasgow, York St John University and Imperial College London). The project was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Originally intended to run from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2011the project was extended to run until Summer 2011. http://www.watchingdance.org/

[117]. http://www.abc.net.au/rn/science/mind/stories/s1323547.htm

[118] According to Pakes our experience of dance is layered and complex than that proposed by physicalist positions. She posits that 'experience is a functional state with a particular character based on inputs (e.g. the perception of another person dancing), dispositions to act (in this case, to dance oneself) and other mental states with which it is associated (such as desire or habitual enjoyment of dancing) (Pakes 2006, 7of 17)'. Leigh Foster (2010) also questions the notion of a direct psychophysical connection between the body of a dancer and that of the observer. In her research into how dance summons its viewers into an empathetic relationship she charts how the meanings of the terms 'choreography', 'kinesthesia' and 'empathy' have been shaped by cultural, social, political and

aesthetic values and judgments. Leigh Foster argues that this, in turn, has led to connection between the body of the dancer and the observer being highly mediated and influenced by ever changing socio-cultural mores.

[119] Many religious and philosophical traditions have identified the existence of two approaches to their ultimate goals. The first approach is gradualist; it is pluralist in that it involves a plurality of methods and a gradual unfolding of understanding over time. The second approach is simultaneist, in that it includes no method, no progress over time, only a single moment of recognition/direct insight. It is simultaneous in that all elements accumulated by the gradual method are present in the singular event (Sam Van Schaik 2004). In some spiritual traditions there is a strong emphasis on training, including praying, in order to get a result: to transcend suffering. In Dzogchen this model does not exist. Dzogchen is not a system, a teaching nor a philosophy. It is often translated as 'Great Perfection'. Sogyal Rinpoche prefers to leave it untranslated because this translation carries a sense of perfection that we have to strive to attain. 'Nothing, could be further from the true meaning of Dzogchen; the already self-perfected state of primordial nature that needs no perfecting' (Sogyal Rinpoche, 1992, p.155).

[120] Pure or absolute immanence is what Deleuze calls 'A Life'. He defines it as a paradoxical experience/duration in which individuality fades and becomes 'a singular essence', an empty time of singularities or virtualities existing in between what we take to be the defining moments of an individual's life. I sense some resonance between this account of immanence and the Buddhist concept of Shunyata. (See footnote 78)

[121] For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
In the valley of its making where executives
Would never want to tamper, flows on south
From ranches of isolation and the busy griefs,
Raw towns that we believe and die in; it survives,
A way of happening, a mouth.
(WH Auden 1939)

[122] 'Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird' by Wallace Stevens, first published in 1917.
'IX
When the blackbird flew out of sight,
It marked the edge
Of one of many circles.'

Appendix i

Body of Work

Solo and Ensemble choreographic works created as a member of Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre (1981-1986), as founder Artistic Director of Daghdha Dance Company (1988-1999) and in my capacity as independent dance artist (1999 to date).

2011 ***'Once Upon a Space'*** **(20 mins.)** Choreographed in collaboration with composer Karen Power. Premier at the Triskel/Christchurch in Cork city as part of the Cork Mid-Summer Festival. Performered by cellist Kate Ellie, dancer Mary Nunan, clarinettist Deirdre O'Leary with electronic music by Karen Power. Toured to Belltable Arts Centre, Limerick and the Back Loft, Dublin.

2011 ***'Unfolding into Stillness'*** **(7mins.)** Solo choreography commissioned by the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance. Premiere at an event to mark the Dalai Lama's public address at the University of Limerick 14th April 2011. Created in colloaboration with composer/musician Kenneth Edge.

2010 ***'Strange Attractor'*** **(4 hours)** Improvised performance with artists Anthony Kelly, Danny McCarthy, Irene Murphy, Mick O'Shea, David Stalling and David Toop. Crawford Gallery.

2010 '*Intimate Cities* (1)' (30 mins) Solo choreography with audience as performers. Firkin Crane, Cork.

2010 ***'HaH'*** **(7mins.)** Choreography-for-camera created in collaboration with dance artist Mary Wycherley**.**

2010 ***Maya Lila*** **(30 mins.)** Improvised performances directed by Joan Davis, Dance House, Dublin.

2009 ***'Riddle in Nine syllables, Get It?'*** **(10 mins.)** Solo choreography and performance, Town Hall Galway as part of 'The Word is Moving' programme curated by Tanya Mac Crory.

2009 ***Maya Lila*** **(50 mins.)** Improvised performances directed by Joan Davis. Gorse Hill, Greystones, Arts Centre, Tinahely, Co. Wicklow Dance House, Dublin.

2008 *'Return Journey'* (144 mins.) Choreography-for-camera and live performance installation developed in collaboration with film-maker James Kelly. Project Arts Centre, Dublin. Live performance 10.00-20.00 daily.

2007 *'Audience (1)Waltzers'* (25 mins.) Live performance installation. Choreographed and performed in collaboration with sound artist Michael Mc Loughlin: Limerick City Gallery, Eigse Carlow (2007), re-Produced programme at Festival Kilkenny (2007), The Lab, Dublin (2007) Vibrate Dance Festival, Roscommon (2008).

2004 *'The God Series No. 1'* (6 mins.) and *'The God Series No. 2'* (6mins.) Solo choreography and performance: Limerick City Gallery.

2003 '*The Yellow Room'* (60 mins.) Collaborative artist and performer in this ensemble choreography, directed by Yoshiko Chuma: Project Arts Centre, Dublin and venues throughout Ireland.

2002 *'Claim reClaim'* (30 mins.) Solo commissioned by International Dance Festival under Artistic Director Catherine Nunes: Project Arts Centre, Dublin.

2001 *'2x2x5'* (10 mins.) Duet commissioned by Yoshiko Chuma, a Daghdha Dance Company and Crash Ensemble collaboration: Glor Arts Centre, Ennis, Project Arts Centre, Dublin.

2001 *'On the Waterfront'* (10 mins.) Site specific duet commisioned by Daghdha Dance Company as part of 'Reverse Psychology, 10,000 Steps' directed by Yoshiko Chuma: St Mary's Parish, Limerick.

1999 *'Far Flung'* (30 mins.) Ensemble choreography for Daghdha Dance Company: Belltable Arts Centre, Limerick, Old Museum Arts Centre, Belfast and Samuel Beckett Theatre, Dublin.

1999 *'Secret Project'* (60 mins) Collaborative artist and performer in a Half Angel/Firkin Crane production, directed by Jools Gilson-Ellis and Richard Povall: Banff Arts Centre, Canada. Performed Firkin Crane, Cork, Project Arts Centre, Dublin.

1998 *'Chimera'* (33 mins.) Ensemble choreography for Daghdha Dance Company: Project Arts Centre (1998) Festival Internacional Cervantino, Guanjuanto, Delores Hildago and Irapuato, Mexico, Belltable Arts Centre, Limerick, Firkin Crane, Cork, University of Limerick Concert Hall, Old Museum Arts Centre, Belfast, Samuel Beckett Theatre, Dublin.

1998 *'Clan Lir'* (80 mins.) Ensemble choreography for the National Folk Theatre at Siamsa Tire: National Folk Theatre, Tralee. Performed annually as part of the Company's summer season.

1997 *'Territorial Claims'* (25 mins.) Screen adaptation of the original dance theatre work. Created in collaboration with film-maker Donal Haughy. Selected for screening at Dance-for-Camera Festival, Lincoln Centre, New York. Included in a DVD distributed by Insight Media.

1997 *'Here then-Elsewhere Now'* (7 mins.) Ensemble for Daghdha Dance Company: Great Irish Famine Event Millstream Cork. Video of the event produced by Sony.

1996 '*Aerdha'* (20 mins.) Ensemble choreography for Daghdha Dance Company: Concert Hall, University of Limerick, Samuel Beckett Centre, Dublin, Firkin Crane, Cork, Belltable, Limerick.

1996 *'On Earth as it is in Heaven'* (30 mins.) Ensemble choreography commissioned by Conservatoire National Superieur de Musique and de Danse, Lyon: Pompidiou Center, Paris. Later developed as an ensemble choreography for Daghdha Dance Company: Samuel Beckett Theatre, Dublin, Belltable Arts Centre, Limerick, Firkin Crane, Cork.

1995 *'Fictional'* (30 mins.) Ensemble for Daghdha Dance Company: Belltable Arts Centre, Project Ats Centre, Old Museum Arts Centre, Gavle Festival, Sweeden, Pompidou Centre, Paris, as part of L'Imaginaire Irlandaise Festival.

1994 *'Like Writing on Water'* (15 mins.) Ensemble for Daghdha Dance Company: Project Arts Centre as part of New Music New Dance Festival**.**

1993 *'For Company'* (50 mins.) Ensemble for Daghdha Dance Company: Belltable Arts Centre, Limerick, Project Arts Centre, Dublin, Festival Iberamerica de Coreografia Oscar Lopez, Barcelona; Caixo,Tarragona Catalonia; Chisenhale Dance Space, London.

1992 *'Territorial Claims'* (20 mins.) Ensemble choreography for Daghdha Dance Company: Project Arts Centre, Dublin, Festival Iberamerica de Coreografia Oscar Lopez, Barcelona, Caixo,Tarragona, Chisenhale Dance Space, London, Belfast Festival at Queens, South Bank Centre London, Tanz-im August Festival, Podweil Theatre, Berlin, Dance '95, Munich, Old Museum Arts Centre, Belfast, Gavle Festival, Sweden, Pompidou Centre, Paris, as part of L'Imaginaire Irlandaise Festival.

1991 *'Through an Eye of Stone'* (50 mins.) Ensemble choreography for Daghdha Dance Company: Belltable Arts Centre, Limerick, Everyman Theatre, Cork, Newman House as part of the Dublin Theatre Festival.

1987 *'Sweeney'* (15 mins.) Solo choreography and performance. Commissioned by Cibeal Cincise, Kenmare, Co. Kerry.

1985 *'Bodyweave'* (60 mins.) Site-specific ensemble choreography commissioned by Cibeal Cincise Arts Festival, Kenmare, Co. Kerry.

1984 *'Polyseter Pyjamas and Things Like That'* (17 mins.) Ensemble choreography for Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre: Molesworth Hall, Dublin.

1982 *'Mna'* (15 mins.) Duet choreographed in collaboration with Joan Davis, Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre: Molesworth Hall, Dublin**.**

1983 *'Sand Dance'* (20 mins.) Ensemble choreography for Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre: Molesworth Hall, Dublin. Performed at the ContemporEire Festival, Dublin.

1983 *'Search'* (15 mins.) Solo choreography and performance, Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre: Project Arts Centre in Dublin, Edinburgh Fringe Festival and Belfast Festival at Queens

Daghdha Education Programme (1988-1999)

1999 *'Feels Like Thunder, Looks Like Rain'* (20 mins.) Ensemble choreography for Daghdha Dance Company.

1998 *'Bach to Bach'* (10 mins.) Ensemble choreography for Daghdha Dance Company. Performed as part of 'New Twist' Daghdha's Education programme.

1997 *'Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolves of Progress Gone Wild'* (50 mins.) Ensemble choreography for Daghdha Dance Company. Toured to schools nationally as part of Daghdha's Education programme and performed in the Ark, Dublin and at Suffolk Dance Agency, Haverhill, Suffolk.

1996 *'Just in Case'* (30 mins.) Ensemble choreography for Daghdha Dance Company. Toured nationally as part of Daghdha's Education programmea including the Ark, Dublin.

1995 *'Tales of the Unexpected'* (50 mins.) Ensemble for Daghdha Dance Company. Toured to schools nationally as part of Daghdha's Education programme.

1994 *'This Way Up'* (15 mins.) Ensemble for Daghdha Dance Company.Toured to schools nationally as part of Daghdha's Education Programme.

1993 *'On Time with Pigs'* (55 mins.) Ensemble Choreography for Daghdha Dance Company. Toured to schools nationally as part of Daghdha's Education programme and Project Arts Centre, Dublin**.**

1990 *'Heartscore'* (60 mins.) Ensemble choreography for Daghdha Dance Company. Toured nationally as part of Daghdha's Education programme and at Project Arts Centre, Dublin

1998 *'Homing In'* (40 mins.) Ensemble choreography for Daghdha Dance Company. Toured nationally as part of Daghdha's Education programme.

Appendix ii

Reviews

"Return Journey"* (2008)** "It is Return Journey's aesthetic conversation around space, perspectives and presence that most beguiles and is rewarded by repeat visits." ***Michael Seaver, Irish Times

"Audience (1)Waltzers"* (2007)** "This play on perspective and challenge to assumptions is repeated in different layers in a deceptively simple, eloquent work." ***Michael Seaver, Irish Times June 2007

"The Yellow Room"* (2003)** "Although featuring choreography by Colin Dunne and Mary Nunan many of (Yoshiko) Chuma's signatures are still present -the metromes, stories and controlled chaos- but there seems more warmth and humanity underlying the action." ***Michael Seaver, Irish Times.

"On the Waterfront"* (2001)** "The poignancy of the tale is brough to life by Kasumi Takahashi and Douglas Comley as they dance Mary Nunan's tender choreography." ***Mike Dixon, Ballet-tanz Magazine, 2001

"Clann Lir"* (1999)** "Above all I loved the combination of Irish traditional footwork and the arm and body movement of contemporary dance which so beautifully suggested the swan's agitated flutterings, their steady wingbeat in flight formation and their battling against storms over the Sea of Moyle." ***Carolyn Swift. The Irish Times (2001)

"Chimera"* (1998)** "The language of modern dance seems more ephemeral than that of the classical tradition, yet Daghdha, in their production of Chimera, give it a cohesion which at times is almost monumental." ***Mary Leland, The Irish Times

"Chimera" (1998) **"At times it is a geometric essay of movement, at times crashing in disjointed disarray, but very musical to wonderful sound effects."** ***Maureen Kelleher, The Examiner***

"Chimera" (1998) "This is a very studied work with a strong atmosphere, in which the dancers give full and intelligent expression." ***Maureen Kelleher, The Examiner***

"Chimera"* (1998)** "Without doubt, the work of Mary Nunan places her among the best artists of our time in the area of contemporary dance. The gentle elegance moves our senses while transforming the experience of being able to encounter something of ourselves in the movements of the dancers into a continual idealisation of space." ***José Rafael Bravo Meza, Correo De Hoy

"Chimera"* (1998)** "Thus Mary Nunan demonstrates her preoccupation with clean movement in the choreographic work, a cleanness which is contemporary and absolutely formal, flooding our senses with beauty." ***José Rafael Bravo Meza, Correo De Hoy

"Chimera"* (1998)** "For the first time during the 26th International Cervantes Festival, the Alhondiga de Granaditas was silent, no shouts, whistles or cheering, all were engrossed in Daghdha Dance Company's performance." ***Enrique Rangel, El Heraldo De León

***"3 Piece Suite"* (1997)** "Among the best of the festival [Dancefest '97]... all seven dancers swooped, soared and wheeled splendidly."
Carolyn Swift, The Irish Times

"3 Piece Suite"* (1997)** "Beautifully constructed... and made even more evocative of the events by the music." ***Don Swift, Evening Herald

"3 Piece Suite"* (1997)** "Engagingly passionate with a good use of space and strong musicality." ***Maureen Kellagher, The Examiner

"Fictional"* (1995)** "The mystery and curiosity of the story unfolds through the originality of the choreography." ***Rene Sirvin, Le Figaro

"Fictional"* (1995)** "Danced by five agile and clever dancers... Here you are given room for an enormous fantasy and sometimes it feels that the dancers write the first words while the audience is given the opportunity to finish the sentence." ***Ulrika Nilsson – Arbetarbladet

"Territorial Claims"* (1992)** "A powerful political piece of dance/physical theatre... a forceful comment on the battle for cultural identity." ***Ashling Duffield, The Irish News

***"Territorial Claims"* (1992)** "One of the highlights [of Springtime Collection, London] was Mary Nunan's 'Territorial Claims'... it has a very musical contemporary breakdown born from pure forms of folkdance."
Jochen Schmidt, Frankfurter Allgemeine

"Territorial Claims"* (1992)** "A powerful, hard and virtuoso choreography... to expose the combined brutality and logic of our time." ***Volker Boser, AZ Feuilleton

"Through and Eye of Stone"* (1991)** "Almost heart-stopping visual articulation....." ***Mary Leland, The Irish Times 1990

"Heartscore"* (1990)** "Punchy, polished, portable and professional." ***Diana Theodores, Sunday Tribune

"Homing In"* (1989**) "A fine achievement, danced with skill and careful preparation-and a huge amount of energy and sheer joy, which are wildly infectious." ***Victoria White, The Irish Times.

"Sand Dance"* (1984)** "At times the momentum achieves the pitch and focus of Dervish Whirling." ***Diana Taplin, Sunday Tribune, October 1984

"Sand Dance"* (1984)** "And in "Sand Dance" specifc commitment to the creation of of a contemporary dance for and about southern Ireland." ***John Clifford, The Scotsman, 1984.

"Search"* (1983)** "A highly creative and remarkably artistic short piece." ***Belfast Telegraph 1983

***"Search"* (1983)** "Mary Nunan's startling solo performed to her spoken extracts from Samuel Beckett's Company suggests a fast-developing new dance talent." *New Dance No.27 Winter '83*

Appendix iii

Collaborating Artists

Composer: Michael McLoughlin is a practising artist based in Dublin. He has exhibited widely in Ireland and internationally. He has previously exhibited at The Lab, Dublin, Limerick City Gallery of Art, Limerick, Triskel Art Centre, Cork and as part of audio art radio events such as AART,IMMA (1995), SonicEye, Helsinki (2000) and Resonant Cities, Glasgow (2004). McLoughlin's recent work combines audio, drawing, photography and sculptural objects, and has explored social relationships with the built environment. The work often involves collaboration/co-operation with residents of a particular locale.

Film-Maker: James Kelly spent a number of years working in the arts in Dublin, before deciding to focus his attention on film-making. His experience with Project Arts Centre, Irish Modern Dance Theatre and Loose Canon Theatre Company greatly informed his approach to making documentary film. Since founding Feenish Film and Media Production Company James has produced and directed numerous documentaries and promotional films. James teaches video production in Griffith College Dublin and Independent Colleges, and is Audience Advisor the to Arts Counci/An Chomhairle Ealaoin.

Dance Artist: Mary Wycherley is based in Limerick, Ireland. Her artistic research spans choreography, live performance, and screendance. Her work has been selected for performances and screenings at dance festivals and film exhibitions both nationally and internationally. Her collaborators include choreographers/dancer artists Mary Nunan, Yoshiko Chuma, composers Jürgen Simpson and Steve McCourt, artist and performer Maria Kerin, photographer Maurice Gunning, sound and video artists David stalling, Chanters Oscar Mascareñas and Hans Boller. Mary holds an M.A in Contemporary Dance Performance from the University of Limerick where she now lectures on that MA and the BA in Voice and Dance. Mary has been supported through funding from the Arts Council of Ireland, Dance Ireland, North Tipperary County Council and Daghdha Dance Company.

Dance Artist: Inmaculada Moya Pavon is originally from Spain. Her training includes a Diploma in Physical Education (Spain) and a Master (First Class Honors) in Contemporary Dance Performance from University of Limerick. She has worked extensively in Ireland as a dancer, visual artist, teacher and choreographer. In 2007 she began collaborating with other artists, creating m-brella project - a multidisciplinary project combining movement, theatre and visual art - and appearing at Mamuska Nights, The Granary Theatre and Cork

Arts Trail. Under the mentorship of UK Choreographer Wendy Houston, she took part in the Irish Choreographers New Works Platform in 2007 at The Firkin Crane. She received a bursary from Dance Ireland as part of Initiatives in Choreography 2007/08 to research a new work under the mentorship of artist Amanda Coogan, resulting in a duet for the Project Art Centre - Project New Work. In 2008, she was invited to participate in the Mentoring Programme with Daghdha Dance Company, Limerick.

Composer: Jurgen Simpson's work spans multiple mediums and approaches including electroacoustic works, opera, music for film, dance, and sound installations. He has written two operas, and 2003's Thwaite (librettist Simon Doyle) received the Genesis Opera Prize's top award and was performed at Aldeburgh, London (as part of the Almeida Opera Festival) and at the Dublin Fringe Festival. His song cycle The Second Lesson of the Anatomists, in collaboration with poet Sinead Morrissey, was the featured Irish work at the 2006 Sligo New Music Festival and his choral work Lycanth for the National Chamber Choir was one of the main commissions for the 2003 RTÉ Living Music Festival.

He has collaborated with numerous composers including Michael Nyman, Ian Wilson, Kevin Volans, Raymond Deane and Judith Ring. His long standing association with film maker Clare Langan has produced four films with 2007's Metamorphosis winning the Oberhausen International Film Festival's premier prize and their work has been shown at the MOMA New York, the Liverpool Tate Gallery, Houldsworth Gallery, London and Galerie Nichido Contemporary, Tokyo. He has worked extensively in the field of contemporary dance creating music for the Irish Modern Dance Theatre, choreographer Shobana Jeyasingh and performers Mary Wycherley and Nicole Peisl.

Since 2005 he has created installation works for gallery spaces and in 2008 he created two such works; Hanging Gardens, a sound installation co-located in the Ormeau Baths Gallery Belfast and the University of Limerick, and Within Me, Without You for the 2008 Venice Architecture Biennale, a sound, light and architectural collaboration for architects O'Donnell & Tuomey with lighting designer Nicholas Ward. He is currently writing a third opera with director William Galinsky and librettist Michael West for the 2012 Cork Midsummer Festival.

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